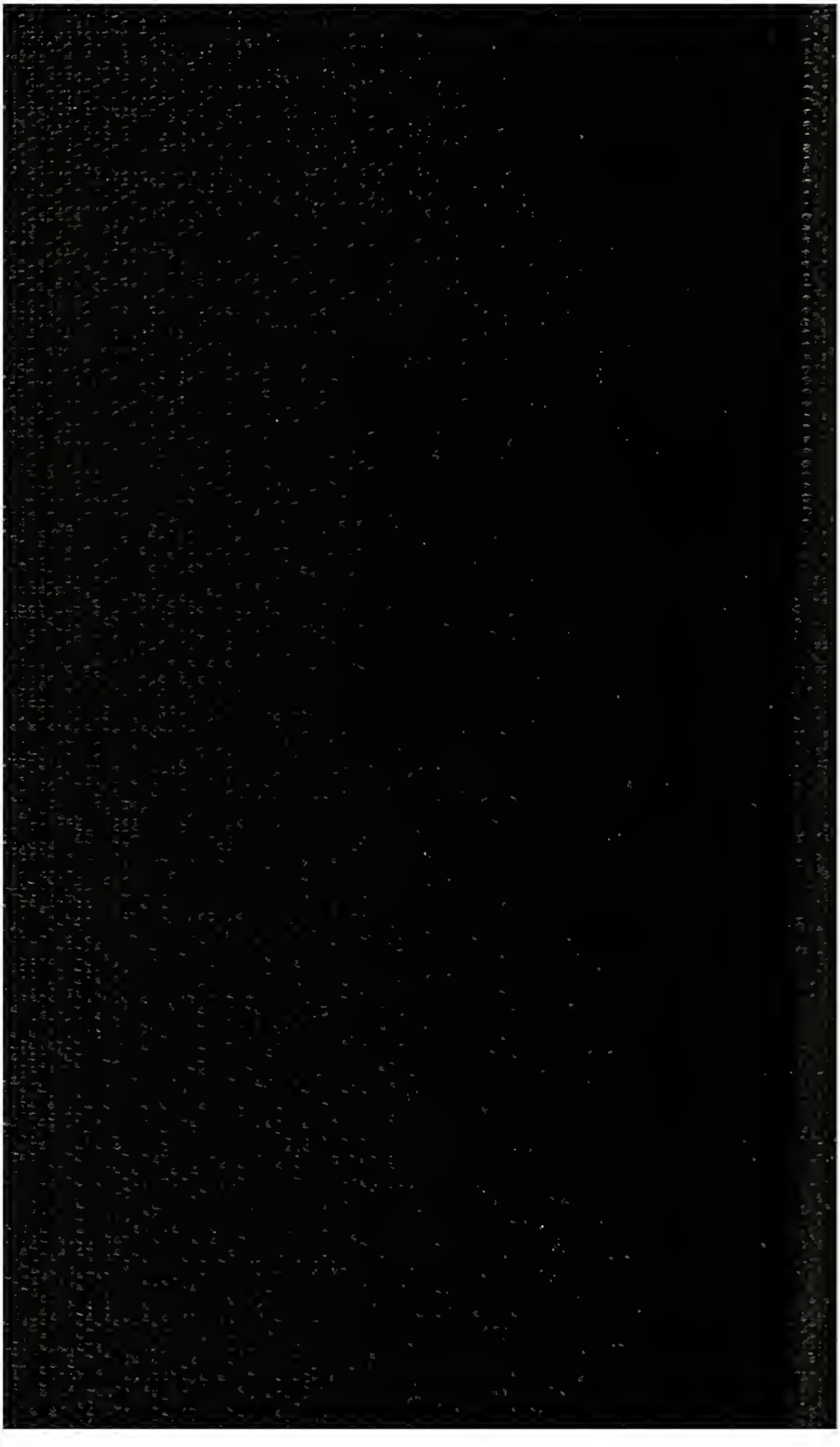

HYDE NUGENT.

A TALE

OF

FASHIONABLE LIFE.

However we do praise ourselves,
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and won,
Than women's are.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

In presenting these volumes to the public, the author disclaims personality, particularly with regard to the character of Herbert. He was made a guardsman; why, the writer scarcely knows: he might as appropriately have been put into any other corps, or have figured as a civilian; it is therefore to be hoped that no offence may be taken where none is meant.

For his own part, the writer has never met with any thing but the brightest honour and the

most liberal and high feeling in all the officers of that distinguished body, with whom he has had the happiness to be acquainted.

As to the other characters, where he has lightly touched upon faults or follies, it has been his aim to bring deeds, rather than actors, into relief; and if any of his readers, after this, choose to fancy the portraits their own, the blame rests with themselves.

HYDE NUGENT.

CHAP. I.

They shall yet belie thy happy years,
Who say thou art a man.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN a beautiful southern county of "merry England," near one of those many sweet silvery streams which wind so peacefully through the flowery meads and verdant woody banks of this fair country, stands Nugent Hall, an old family mansion, for centuries the residence of the ancient race of the proud Nugents, whose boast, perhaps an empty one, has long been,

that an ancestor refused from the hands of the second Edward, a barony and broad lands in addition to those he already possessed, as a reward for his conduct at the bloody field of Bannockburn.

"No, my good liege," said the proud warrior, "it were an added shame that I outlived the day, did I accept of guerdon; but let me be near your Grace's person in our next fight, and if victory declare on our side, as I trust it will, then let me receive such honour at your hands as my poor services shall merit."

In a court, however, torn by faction and disgraced by favouritism, like that of the unhappy Edward, the services of the true old knight were soon forgotten, and no opportunity happening during his life of attending his sovereign to the field, this branch of his family was never ennobled.

A descendant of this Nugent, in the following reign, Sir Ralph, married a sister of the great Du Guesclin, by which he lost his sove-

reign's favour. However, we find honourable mention of a Sir Hyde de Nugent under Henry the Fifth: from this stock—no mean one—sprung our hero.

Nugent Hall, built in the reign of Henry the Seventh, had received, from the time of its foundation to the recent epoch from which our history dates its commencement, so many alterations, additions, and repairs, in the numerous different styles of architecture, proper to the succeeding reigns, that scarcely any of the original building remained to mark the first period of its erection. A once strong and extensive castle stood on a neighbouring hill, forming a most picturesque object from the windows of the peaceful hall, as it frowned over the commanding eminence on all around it, still seeming, though in adversity, to enjoy its pride of place.

At the conclusion of the devastating wars of the Roses, a more simple style of dwelling came into general fashion, and many of the feudal castles were abandoned by their lords, for the greater

convenience which the halls, as they were usually denominated, afforded for the amusements of the chase. These had now become almost the sole occupation of their owners, who were glad, after so long a period of terror and bloodshed, to relinquish the war-lance for the hunting-spear, and the clangor of the brazen trumpet for the softer though not less enlivening notes of the *cor de chasse*.

The hall presented to the eye, therefore, a curious *mélange* of styles and tastes, each opposed to the other, and rendering it impossible that a correct or uniform whole should arise out of such a congregated mass of angular and circular flat-roofed tower and minaret, red-brick and gray-stone. For the antiquarian, however, this venerable consequence of the changing taste of succeeding generations had all the charms that a regular and uniformly built edifice, displaying but one style and one order, would have for more modern architects: though a celebrated member of that order-

ly body hath built himself a dwelling, in which all the different styles are blended; whether happily or not, we leave others to pronounce. On three sides of the hall were broad flagged terraces; the stables occupied the rear. The front, of deep red brick, could boast of windows, in the cumbrous white sashes of which, by the curious, might be counted forty panes of glass: these were, however, principally in the middle rooms, and by no means corresponding with each other in length or breadth; a glorious contempt of regularity being the most apparent feature in every thing about this singular edifice. In other places the windows were narrow, and admitted but little light. The front, except where broken by a tower, was surmounted with a stone balustrade. The entrance-door was overhung by a ponderous stone shield, bearing the arms of Nugent; the cockatrice crest had lost its head however, and the motto, *Decrevi*, Time seemed to have resolved should soon be rendered illegible by his imper-

ceptible, though never idle finger. The parapets guarding the broad flight of steps which led to the door, sustained each a carved and fluted centenary urn, which like Shakspeare's Patience, seemed affected with a green and yellow melancholy, being patched and streaked by damp moss.

The interior of the mansion was quite in keeping with its outside. The hall-floor of polished oak, black with years, sustained divers old-fashioned chairs, on the backs of which were hunting devices, a bugle, a cap, a horse, a dog, &c. The walls were hung with old armour, cross and other bows, with all their necessary appendages, spears, stags horns, fishing-rods, every ancient and modern implement of the chase, and many of war. Pictures of former Nugents also decked and darkened the walls, with their black bushy beards, frowning rather than smiling at the ladies fair and beautiful, whose eyes seemed to reflect back the brightness of their lords' armour, and regard

with intense admiration the Roses (fearful emblem !) which they held in their hands. Other parts of the wall were hung with hunting-pieces; the horses looking most affectionately at each other, and pawing the foreground, or galloping in the distance; their riders in full bottomed wigs and scarlet coats; the time sun-rise.

Excuse us, reader, while we apostrophise the happy youthful days of our great-grandfathers, when the hardy and healthy sportsman was roused at break of day by the cheering notes of the French-horn; when after a substantial breakfast of venison pasty or other viands, washed down by a glass of claret, or a tankard of mild October, the eye was delighted, and the heart gladdened with the sight of the ready-saddled hunter, and the joyous bark of the fox-hounds as they were unkennelled. Alas! the character of the old English squire is quite gone by, and fortunes, which were fully equal to the keeping up of a large establishment in

the country, are now spent without thought in the gaieties and dissipation of a town-life, or the more deplorable triflings of a watering-place.

To proceed—the different parts of Nugent Hall exhibited primitive signs of antiquity and precision. Even the servants seemed peculiar to the place, and all, save one or two spruce grooms and a pretty housemaid, (the latter of whom might chance to cross your path, if you wandered through the old haunted-looking galleries) had an air of the greatest preciseness. The furniture, in some few rooms, was the only *matériel* of modern date about the place, and this underwent no change where a contrast with the ancient style of the apartment would have rendered the effect incongruous and absurd. With all this, there was the greatest degree of comfort every where, even luxury; and although no French cook was kept, Nugent Hall was as famous for its good dinners, as it was for the

capital claret and champagne which were daily elicited from the binns of its cellar.

From amongst the antiquities of the hall, we beg leave to except the master and mistress, with their son and daughter. Mr. Nugent, from what has gone before, it may well be supposed, was devoted to his country-house; and with infinite taste and sense, preferred the shade of the venerable oaks which his ancestors had planted, and the fine air of the neighbouring hills, to the dusty streets and smoky atmosphere of London. If therefore he never soliloquised as we have apostrophised, we are sure that this was often the subject of his contemplations, and it shall serve us as an excuse for interrupting the thread of our narrative, which indeed we have scarcely yet begun.

At the old hall was our hero born, and here also were the first years of his life passed, as happily as the tenderness of kind parents, and the society of a beloved sister could make them. His father, possessed of an income of seven

thousand a-year, was a man of sound and upright principles, though unfortunately a whig; and knowing this, some of our readers may doubt the aptness of the foregoing epithets.

Every man has a right to enjoy his own opinions; and as one of the community, Mr. Nugent has the same privilege. He had represented the county of ——— in a former parliament, but had been turned out by a tory, Mr. St. Quentin, whose estate joining the Nugents', made the two families the closest friends, while their political opinions were in direct opposition. The good sense of the two gentlemen, however, prevented them from indulging in arguments, which could only tend to disunite their families and their friendship, while they would certainly fail to convince one that the ideas of the other were not erroneous, or induce either to yield one inch of ground to his opponent. Politics, therefore, were seldom discussed; both were great farmers; and with politics, hunting, tithes, rents, taxes,—no, not

taxes,—poors-rates, and parish business, they found enough to employ their tongues and their time, without treading upon more dangerous ground. Perhaps there might also be something in the fact of Mr. St. Quentin's having himself had a very short reign, being superseded in his representation of the county by a man who had professed to be both whig and tory as occasion required, but who was now held to be neither by those who scrutinised his character. Seldom, we believe, has a friendship continued to subsist between men who were in such direct opposition to each other; but in this instance, perhaps a solitary one, it was the case.

The greatest friend, however, that Mr. Nugent possessed, was the Marquis of Malmesbridge. Old college chums, or at least companions,—the acquaintance begun at Oxford, and strengthened in after years, had, with an unremitting mutual kindness, consolidated itself into the warmest affection. After each had mar-

ried, they were of course less together; but never did any change take place in the feelings of their hearts, although here again their political principles were at variance; and the marquis led a town-life, while Mr. Nugent strictly confined himself to the country from the first year after his marriage.

Mrs. Nugent was an agreeable and accomplished woman, and we think you would have liked her, reader! Her son and daughter, Hyde and Louisa, were twins; and after this addition to her family, she never presented her husband with any other children. Nursing, therefore, had spoiled neither her figure or her temper, and her only care was to bring up Louisa, while Hyde was left to the tutelage of his father. Mr. Nugent was a man of sense; and although not blinded by absurd partiality, saw so many good points in his wife's character, that he begged, whenever he was consulted about Louisa, she might only be made to resemble her mother in every thing. What a good husband!

It must be confessed that little Master Hyde was a great pet with his too fond mother; but any bad effect from this was counteracted by the constant companionship which subsisted between him and Mr. Nugent from a very early age: thus while the parent preserved his due authority, a feeling of friendly affection was generated in the child's bosom. After years, and an insight into the needless severity kept up in other families, producing the natural consequence of father and son being too much asunder, to the estrangement of all good feeling,—made him bless the happy fortune which gave him such a parent, and vow never to disoblige him by adopting a different course to that which his constant good advice had urged him to pursue. But we anticipate. Hyde, we have said, was rather a pet: all ladies will have their favourites, whether wives or maids: this has her lap-dog, that her darling boy; the difference between which two animals is, that the one begins his life a puppy, and grows up a dog;

while the other is a bear in childhood, and grows up a puppy.

But this was not likely to be the case with Hyde Nugent: he was too sensible; and although naturally passionate, too well-disposed, had too little vanity, and too much goodness of heart, ever to become the ungrateful, petulant, and overbearing ruffian, who too generally returns the ill-judged kindness of his parents during his youth, by overwhelming them with shame and remorse, when man begins to assert the superiority in his perverse and ungovernable nature. Such was not Hyde.

At the time when this history commences, our hero was but in the first years of childhood, a fine lively boy,—a favourite, and deservedly so.

It was on one of those still days in October, when the falling leaves, and the fickle sun gleaming fitfully upon the numberless bright tints of the golden foliage, give us a high yet melancholy intimation of the approaching winter, that Lord Malmesbridge made a flying

visit to the Nugents: his marchioness had been left at a watering-place; and he himself, obliged to run up for a few days to town, had taken this opportunity of digressing a few miles from his route to enjoy the pleasure of an interview with his old friend. He dismounted at the avenue gate, and walked up the approach, sending his groom forward with the horses; and as he slowly neared the old hall, and contemplated objects familiar with the days of his thoughtless youth, perhaps not the least agreeable of his life, his ideas were much of a corresponding strain with those, in the expression of which we have recently indulged, regarding the departure of the healthful and joyous era of our great grandfathers. Not unmixed with these, came recollections of the old times, when he had ridden down that avenue with a jolly set of young fox-hunters, fresh as the morning, after having partaken of as good a breakfast as the hospitable hall provided, which was by no means to be despised, although neither venison pasty, October, nor

claret graced the board. The marquis sighed as he thought of past times; and a train of reflections, some of them unwelcome, intruding upon his mind, he was not sorry to find himself ascending the steps at the hall-door. He entered the drawing-room unannounced: his reception we need not dwell upon; and as we have only mentioned this visit for the purpose of noticing a slight incident which occurred during its continuance, we shall not fatigue the reader with an uninteresting detail of facts, which but little concerned the hero of our tale: those which did concern him were merely what follow.

Young Hyde, shortly before dinner, ran into the drawing-room with Lord Malmesbridge's whip, having taken a mighty fancy not only to the marquis, but to every thing which belonged to him,—a *penchant* which he happened to preserve in his after years. After being about half as troublesome as a thoroughly spoiled child would have made himself, he "took to

hunting;" and cracking his whip, displaced a magnificent porcelain jar from a pier table, which rolled with a ponderous crash to the floor, breaking into a thousand pieces.

"Oh my lovely jar!" exclaimed Mrs. Nugent, "that I would not have had broken for the whole world. Hyde, Hyde, what *have* you done!"

"Diamond, Diamond!" said the marquis, "you little know the mischief you have caused!"

Hyde, however, was quite aware that he had done wrong, but did not think the injury so great as Mrs. Nugent seemed to do, by the value she set upon the jar. He was in a mood bordering upon the melting, when his father coolly walked him out of the room into his own study, where he was placed in the solitary confinement of a corner, from which Mr. Nugent knew the child's high sense of honour and obedience would not permit him to move till he was released by himself. He (Hyde) was well aware that his offence deserved punishment,

and submitted with a good grace, though not without a flood of tears, to the imprisonment to which his father had doomed him. When the dessert was placed on the table after dinner, and Louisa, a beautiful girl of six years old, made her appearance, the absence of her brother was noticed by Lord Malmesbridge, and he begged for the pardon and release of the little prisoner.

"I have told him," said Mr. Nugent, "that he is not to enter our presence this evening."

"My poor boy!" exclaimed the marquis; "do let me liberate him,"—and he rose for the purpose. "Do grant me this one favour, Nugent."

"I could almost resolve to make it the condition of your remaining with us another day," replied Mr. Nugent, "but that I can scarcely think the favour you ask would be a fair equivalent to the one you would confer. But sit down, my dear Malmesbridge! the boy will be set free by no one but myself," continued he, rising.

"Is he so high-minded, or are the rules of dis-

cipline so strict at Nugent Hall? Give me some token, and I will go to him; for I am determined, as my whip was the cause of all the mischief, I will myself have the pleasure of telling him I have procured his pardon."

Mr. Nugent gave the marquis his gold snuff-box, on which was a dove bearing an olive branch;—an old present from Lord Malmesbridge at Oxford, when a reconciliation took place between these two friends after some slight disagreement.

The marquis soon returned with our hero in his arms, having succeeded in his kind mission, and placing the boy in the lap of his delighted mother, said, "There, now beg mamma's pardon for your past offences, and do not hunt among china jars again."

Lord Malmesbridge left Nugent Hall the next morning, notwithstanding the pressing solicitations of its owner that he would prolong his stay; nor was he again within its walls for some years, during which time our hero continued to

receive the treasured instructions of his father, and enjoy a wild run in the beautiful demesne of Nugent Hall, where exercise and fine air gave him an appearance of youthful beauty and vigorous health, unknown to, or rather unseen in, a child brought up within the smoky precincts of a town.

In these lovely grounds were many sequestered nooks amidst thick plantations; for the improving spirit which marks the age, had not spread itself in the land, without having inspired the owner of Nugent Hall with some portion of its essence, much as he was addicted to old customs and loved old fashions; and though richly studded with venerable trees, yet it must be confessed that the place was still capable of great improvement. And in this it was, according to Christie, more than perfect. That famous auctioneer, in his description of some fine demesne, ingeniously submitted that it possessed but one fault, namely, that of being *faultless*; "for, ladies and gentlemen," said he, "there is nothing

which fancy can devise that is not already done to this magnificent place. In a word, ladies and gentlemen, you cannot make improvements." Here, then, Nugent Hall had the advantage, for you could make many improvements.

But to proceed. These nooks and dells in miniature had many charms for Hyde, who, on a calm and sunny day, would roam through their mazes, and lose himself in the labyrinths of young trees. This was his delight. Or, if capricious fancy changed his taste, as changed the weather or the day, he might be found where the gnarled and knotted oak, and the wide-spreading beech, flourished in all their wild glory. The sublime, however, rather than the beautiful, asserted her dominion over him, though as yet he inquired not the difference between them. The hurricane sweeping with fitful gust through the aged woods had more charms for Hyde than the gentle zephyr breathing through shrub and over flower; and the brawling and foaming torrent, than the tranquil river, winding " the

even tenor of its way" through verdant meads, and by flowery banks, or the still and glassy lake, reflecting in its purple deep the sky above, and the trees which fringed it. Yet there was a spot which in some measure partook of both qualities. This was a small lake, deep in the bosom of a wood, and fed by a rivulet which took its source from a neighbouring hill of rock and moss, tufted and ornamented with weeping birch. The waters of the lake found egress where two rocks, inclining towards each other, seemed almost to bar their progress, forming two sides of a natural arch, and wanting but the key-stone to complete it, the place of which was supplied by a crest of shrubby hazel. Freed from this obstacle, the glad waters bounded over rock and tree, which protruded themselves into the stream, and thundering down a romantic glen, wound away in the distance, and joined the river which rolled tranquilly through the grounds. On one of these arching rocks would Hyde seat himself, musing, and watching the

stream; or, if his mood was less in accordance with the clamorous torrent, he would throw himself at length upon the bank of the lake, and view the sunny wooded glades and lovely vistas through the beautiful overhanging trees of every different sort, with which the taste of former Nugents had adorned this fairy spot. In this place his book was his usual companion; or, if he read not, he would mark the fantastically shaped boughs waving their broad arms in the summer gale; the graceful beech and lofty pine, or the tall oak mingled with the silvery birch and chestnut, some bending to the influence of the southern breeze, others bearing sturdily up against the gale, with all the varied effects of light and shade upon the foliage, as the thin cloud passed over the sun, or the sun again poured forth his brilliancy. The slightly ruffled surface of the lake, so sheltered by surrounding trees that the wind scarcely played upon its waters; the noise of the agitated leaves; the gilded foliage restless and moving like a sea,

the light scud flying over-head,—all conspired to fascinate the mind of our hero, and render him independent of companions. But with all this, Hyde was not of a solitary disposition; though nature had gifted him with a perception of her beauties, which was earlier developed in him than in most human beings, and thus possessed him at times with something of a feeling of dislike for society; yet his youthful playfellows, when he met them in the sons of surrounding gentry, ever found him a cheerful companion, and a ready partaker in every sport.

The nearest neighbours the Nugents had were the St. Quentins, whose estate of Dane's Court joined that of Nugent Hall. The young people were, of course, much together: the boys, however, when the period arrived that called them away from home to enjoy the pleasures and undergo the miseries of a public school, were of course, separated,—Hyde being sent to Westminster, and the young St. Quentins to Harrow. Augusta St. Quentin and Louisa

continued their friendship undisturbed, being brought up by their respective mothers.

With the fine feelings which our hero possessed, it may be supposed that he heard with very little satisfaction of his father's intention to send him to Westminster. Thither, however, he was obliged to go at the age of eleven. Mr. Nugent preferred sending him to this school, because he had been there himself, and his father, grandfather, and great uncles—a very efficient reason, he thought, why it should be a better place than Eton or Harrow. Whether this really is the case or not, it would be wrong in us to hazard an opinion: we had penned a few lines setting forth the advantages of Westminster, but upon consideration we expunged them, for we thought it would be unwise to draw down the wrath of "The Etonian."

Whatever our own partiality for Westminster may be, it was for some time most cordially hated by Hyde Nugent. He abhorred books,—no, not books,—but learning any thing, because

he was obliged to do so; he found fault with the system,—it was not like his father's; he despised the ushers; he disliked the masters; he hated the fellows; in short, all, he thought, were alike detestable. He was the idlest of the idle, the most obstinate of the obstinate; the latter, because he thought he was too hardly dealt with for being the former: the consequence was, he was well flogged by the masters, and well thrashed by the upper boys for his impertinence. He had an idea, when he first went there, that he might enjoy or amuse himself as he pleased; but in this he was soon doomed to find himself mistaken; he discovered that a young boy at a public school has no will of his own. His fistic powers were very soon exercised on the head of another boy of his own age, who attempted to lord it over him: a ring was quickly formed for these two combatants, and the countenance of Master Nugent, we fear we must confess, was in a few minutes such, that it would have puzzled Mrs. Nugent to have recognised her son. Fortu-

nately mammas little know how their darlings are knocked about when they leave home for the first time, or their tender hearts would never suffer the poor boys to return after the first holydays. But Nugent was a fellow to be licked, which means that he would take a good deal of hammering before he cried for quarter. In the first six weeks he had fought as many battles with various success: fortune, indeed, did not at first shine upon him; he was no match for the science displayed by the Westminster fellows; but at length he got a valuable hint or two, how to stop, how to plant a left-handed muzzler, &c. &c., and being a boy of determined courage, he was soon allowed to "follow his own vagary;" and after some time, it was by most agreed that "Nugent, when you knew him, was a devilish good sort of fellow."

Brave, generous, and unshrinking from punishment, honourable to his companions, and no Marplot, he could not fail soon to become a general favourite. On his part also, he found

that Dr. *** was kind enough, and good-natured when a fellow behaved well, and that *** was not such a bad one after all. In short, the under-master and ushers had discovered that the great failing in young Nugent was want of application; that he was at heart a well-disposed boy, but that he must be led and not driven; kindness, not coercion, was the method by which he was to be brought on. Here it is that the skill of a master shows itself: the same rules will not apply to all tempers; and it would be as preposterous to put the same bit into the mouth, or the same tightness of curb upon the rein of every horse without distinction, as it is to use the same rules without variation in teaching or bringing up a number of different boys, all of whose tempers and dispositions, wills and abilities, are

—— variable as the shade,
By the light quivering aspen made.

A good understanding, in process of time,

was generated between master and scholar, from each finding the other out; and Hyde, possessed of good abilities, made his way to the upper school with as great a portion of credit as half the boys there. His long holydays were of course spent at home; his half-holydays, that is to say, Saturday and Sunday, were passed dolefully enough with old Lady Wetherby in Portland-place, the widow of his great uncle, who, having married Miss Wetherby for her money, she being an heiress, was obliged to take her name: it was "so nominated in the bond." Sir William Nugent was a distinguished general-officer, and K. B.: he sought and won the hand of the rich Miss Wetherby: whether her heart went with it, was, he thought, of small consequence at the time; however, his own paid dearly for the experiment; for very few years had passed over his head before the violent temper and sordid habits of this mean woman sent him to that "bourn from whence no traveller returns;"—a deserved judgment for sell-

ing himself for gold, and disposing of his hand and person, where he was well aware his affections could never follow.

In these regular Saturday and Sunday visits, Hyde was accompanied by a schoolfellow, a distant relation of Lady Wetherby's, named George Maskwell, who was a prodigious favourite with the old woman. For our hero, he was always delighted to get back even to Westminster; any where he thought was better than that abode of stinginess and pride, cold reserve and starched propriety. Mrs. Nugent had been prevailed on to send Louisa up with her father to town, where she remained a few months with her aunt, that she might have the advantage of masters; and glad was she when her mother, unable longer to exist without her, recalled the town-wearied girl to the delights of the country. The long holydays were spent by our hero in any thing but preparing his task, or looking over what he had already learned. His father, we must confess, though a first-rate classic,

took greater delight in reading a long account in the papers of an "extraordinary fox-chase" with his own hounds, concluding with, "Master Nugent, two other gentlemen, and the huntsmen, were the only persons in at the death, &c." than he would, had his son's name appeared loaded with academic honours. "But there is not much of that sort of thing at Westminster," said Mr. Nugent to himself, as the same idea crossed his mind. And indeed, young Hyde at sixteen, with his scarlet coat and hunting-whip, his splashed boots, and his face glowing with health and happiness, though certainly not an uncommon sight, was such as no parent could regard with indifference; nor could Mr. Nugent, when the hounds were to meet at Bustledown Mill, refuse his consent to his son's accompanying him with any degree of justice, he thought, while he allowed him to hunt when they threw off at Highover Scrubs.

And whenever the strict parent did strive to get the better of the tender father in Mr.

Nugent, the mother was sure to display all her fondness in his wife, and make intercession for her beautiful boy. "Remember, Nugent," she would say, "how short a time he has to remain at home, poor fellow! and pray let him enjoy home while he does stay." Mr. Nugent, on these occasions, would shrug his shoulders: "Ah! this used not to be the case once, Master Hyde! but come, since your mother will have it so, go to bed, and do not keep me waiting for you to-morrow, while you are making a dandy of yourself."

Homer and Horace were little thought of after this, and the delighted boy could hardly sleep for the anxious anticipation of the next day's hunt; and in his sleep even, went over visionary hedge and ditch with all the sporting ardour of a youthful mind, and the double delight which a dream gives to the warm imagination of a young fox-hunter.

At length, Hyde was liberated from Westminster: he was now seventeen, and as Mr.

Nugent thought it full time enough for him to proceed to Oxford in another year, he was allowed to pass the intermediate space at home. This interval was, with other matters, appropriated to his French and Italian studies. His more serious or abstruse reading was directed by his very capable father, whose well-stored library was to Hyde a treasure of the greatest value,—that is, on rainy days, or when the fit of study was on him. It may appear strange to the reader that this should ever have been the case, from the character we have given of our hero while at Westminster; but the fact is, he was fond of literary pursuits, when those of the fox or hare were out of the question. However, he loved to follow the bent of his inclinations, whatever way they might lead; and any thing like coercion was gall and wormwood to his high spirit: even his father was obliged to act with the greatest delicacy and care in directing the course of his son's studies.

CHAP. II.

An' her hair were somewhat darker, there were no more comparison between the women!

SHAKSPEARE.

WE have now passed over the boyish years of Hyde Nugent, and are about to commence that period of his life, when a few little *évènemens* occurred, which perhaps will be of more interest to the reader than the preceding details. However, if we have wearied him, we beg he will consider that every one, whether hero or not, must have a beginning, and the few first years of a person's existence give, perhaps, a greater insight to the character and disposition than the after part of life, when a communication with the world has taught deceit

and disingenuousness, and the wary man uses the disguise of concealment, which the inartificial boy would scorn, or find no occasion to adopt.

We present Hyde Nugent to our readers at that age when boy is ripening into manhood; when the folly and thoughtlessness of early years is put aside; yet before a thorough knowledge of the world has sophisticated the better feelings. To be brief, he was eighteen, and it was in the summer of 18— that he sat surrounded by books in the library at Nugent Hall, while his mother and sister were engaged in some very interesting conversation in the drawing-room; and, as we prefer ladies' society to men's at most times, we shall leave Master Hyde with "store of literary wealth," a ponderous folio on each side of his arm-chair on the floor, in the which to refer for elucidations of the ample quarto before him, assisted by the lighter armed troops in the shape of octavos, &c.

which lay strewed at his feet. Leave we him thus, and let us proceed to the drawing-room, where the lovely Louisa and her mother were sitting together at their work ; but whether they were knitting purses, or making bracelets, winding silk, or embroidering frills, or what other useful employment occupied their precious time and their delicate fingers, at this period we cannot take upon ourselves to say; also, must we leave our fair readers in the dark as to what their conversation *had been ;* whether it turned upon the fashions for July, which had just come to them in the last number of *La Belle Assemblée,* touching the becomingness of sleeves *en gigot,* or trimmings *en bateau ;* embroidery *en chenille,* or *colerettes à la Vandyck ;* peach colour, or *ponceau ;* Pomona green, or jonquil: or, as to whether the figure suffered, or the contrary, in a court dress, from the discontinuance of the hoop. We rather think it had something to do with the latter, as when Mr.

Nugent entered the room with a newspaper in his hand, Louisa asked if she might not be presented next year.

"Presented! a very pretty question!" exclaimed her father, good humouredly: "what has such a country girl to do with drawing-rooms? And who is to present you? Aunt Wetherby? Well, you shall go up by the coach with Adam the butler; he will pass for your grandfather, and take you safe to Portland-place. Or, if you choose to wait till Hyde comes from Oxford—he 'll go there next year—why, then—"

"Then what? my dear Nugent, pray speak rationally," said his *cara sposa*.

"Why then, we 'll see about it."

"Folly, Nugent! Really it is quite time this dear girl should see something of the world. Louisa, my love, go up to my room, and bring me down the coloured silks."

Louisa knew she was sent out of the room to be talked about, and was consequently in no hurry to return with the silks.

"You know," continued Mrs. Nugent to her lord, "she has been kept here like a recluse all her life, excepting the few months she passed in town with your aunt."

"And why not *your* aunt?"

"Because you know I can't bear her. But I think, Nugent, if there is any drawing-room next year, I should like to have her presented. The Duchess of Bolingbroke will be very happy to do so; she made the offer last summer when they were with us."

"I have not the slightest objection to her being presented," said Mr. Nugent; "but as she is only seventeen——"

"You know she is eighteen."

"Well, eighteen: she has a year to spare yet."

"Do I not say next year?"

"But next year we proposed going to Weymouth you know."

"Oh, but we can put that off."

"Nay, my dear Arabella, you were so de-

cided upon it, that I made arrangements with the St. Quentins to meet us there, and this sudden change of plans will look something like caprice."

"Caprice? my dear Mr. Nugent!"

"And besides I really cannot afford to go to town. Five-and-twenty per cent off the rents, and this agricultural dis——"

"Oh pray do not dose us with agriculture! keep that all for Mr. St. Quentin."

"Nay, but my dear Arabella," said Mr. Nugent, taking her by the braceletted wrist, and putting her hand in his own, "you will listen to reason I am sure; and when I tell you that I cannot afford to keep an establishment in town without giving up the fox-hounds, you will——"

"Oh no, my sweet Harry, I will not hear of the hounds being given up; but you know six weeks in town would not be so very expensive, and we could get a house in Cavendish-square on reasonable terms enough."

"Oh, very reasonable! No, no; put it off for

a year, and then we can do the thing well, without sending the hounds away, or having the horses up at Tattersall's. If we are to go to town, you must live in every respect as becomes yourself and Mr. Nugent; and I think a house, even a *reasonable* one, in Cavendish-square, a box at the Opera, new carriages, new liveries, a few balls and parties, and a great many dinners, will be no trifling expense to a poor country gentleman like myself. However, as you say, Louisa must be presented; but recollect, one season passed in town will give her such a taste for it, that every succeeding one will be thrown away in the same manner,—that is, till she is married."

"My dear Nugent, what upon earth has the drawing-room to do with her being married?"

Louisa here entered, and Mr. Nugent observed that the Malmesbridges were still in town, as he saw by the paper.

"I should like," continued he, "to ask them down here for a short time, on their way to the

sea-side, where they go, you know, almost every year."

"Very well," said Mrs. Nugent, "write and ask them; but we must have some people to meet them. It will be too hard to make them come here and stupefy, after all the gaieties of town; but then, Harry, this agricultural depression, and the five and twenty per cent off the rents——" and she looked up at her husband with a smile.

"I find you are too much for me, Arabella," replied he: "it is true, we *must* have some one to meet them. Who is there? The St. Quentins we can always have. St. Quentin 's such a devil of a tory, that Malmesbridge and he will get on very well together; but it matters little whether pleasant and well-bred people are whigs or tories. We can ask the Rochdales, and one or two other people; and the old Wetherby, we must have her down, though she is a great bore; but ten thousand a-year is not to be lost for

such a trifling penance as a fortnight of her society will inflict."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Nugent, "it would be very foolish to quarrel with her; besides she was very kind to Louisa. Louisa, you like your aunt Wetherby very much, don't you, my love?"

A smile on Louisa's face answered this question more expressively than words could do; but it was a smile which said any thing rather than "yes."

"I would not advise you to offend her though, Miss Louisa," said her father: "who knows but she may give you a pair of diamond ear-rings to wear at the drawing-room?"

"Oh! papa, *may* I be presented next year?" said Louisa, with a supplicating smile, while her dark eyes glistened with pleasure.

"*Cela dépend,*" said her father: "not next year, I think; but we shall see."

"I am afraid, if her diamond ear-rings do not depend from her ears till the old lady gives

them to her," said Mrs. Nugent, "she will be qualified to wear rouge before the time comes about."

"We will have her down here notwithstanding," said Mr. Nugent; "and Narcissus Moyle, our young Irishman; he will amuse her."

"What a Narcissus!" exclaimed Mrs. Nugent.

"Louisa," said her father, "I think he would make you a very good husband. He was desperately smitten the last time we had him here. He calls you the siren of the south, you know, meaning it as a compliment, no doubt. I have an idea that he will throw himself at your feet before long. How should you like to be mistress of Castle Moyle, in the county of Kilkenny?"

"Oh, of all things!" replied the young lady: "I should delight in being an Irish chieftainess, in my halls of state, with my serfs and vassals around me, my gray-haired bard rhapsodising in my praise, and the youth of the province all

straining who should be the foremost to kiss the hem of my robe."

"My dear child, where did you pick up all this absurdity?" said Mr. Nugent.

"She has been reading Ossian with Hyde at the waters of Moyle, as they have termed them, since the luckless youth tumbled in, while he was gazing on this southern siren. How Hyde ever contrived to drag him out, I cannot imagine; Mr. Moyle is so much older."

"As to your halls," observed Mr. Nugent, "I am afraid their *state* would be an unfurnished one; and for the youth of the province, Narcissus is too ugly to allow many of them to follow in your train, though in a multitude there is safety."

"My dear Nugent!" exclaimed his lady.

"My dear Arabella, I have not spoken treason, have I? Halloo, Mr. Hyde!" said his father, as our hero entered, "I thought I left you engaged with Herodotus."

"True, Sir," replied Hyde; "but the first yawn told me it was time to shut him up. He's rather dry."

"Herodotus dry, my dear boy? what would Dr. Page say? Booted and spurred too! where are you going in such a hurry?"

"I don't know what Dr. Page would *say*, Sir; but what he would *do* if he was as tired of him as I am, would be much what I mean to do—take a gallop across the country, that is if he was able; but I think it would puzzle the learned doctor to sit blackleg, if he were to attempt a five-barred gate."

"Hyde, I will not have you riding across the country in this dry weather: it is too like a school-boy, and the farmers will be by no means obliged to you. Besides, consider my horses' feet and shoulders, and your own neck."

"I shall only take the common, Sir."

"If you have patience to wait while I write a letter, I will accompany you," said Mr. Nu-

gent: "Louisa, go and get your habit on; you shall ride with us to the post-office."

Mr. Nugent rang for his spurs, ordered the horses, and sat down to write to Lord Malmesbridge. Louisa lost no time in departing to equip herself, dreading her mother's making some objection to the heat of the weather, which in fact she was just commencing when her daughter left the room, and was obliged to give Hyde the benefit of the conclusion.

"Oh, we can ride down Alburton-lane," replied he, "and return by Dane's Court instead of coming across the common. It will be shady the whole way: besides, Louisa wants to see Augusta St. Quentin, I know."

"Hyde," said Mr. Nugent, "sit down and write to Moyle; tell him he must come down here forthwith. You know where he is."

"Arabella," said Mr. Nugent, "we need not ask the Rochdales till we hear whether the Malmesbridges will come or not; but you can write to

Lady Wetherby when we set out on our ride."

The trio departed, and Mrs. Nugent, having performed her task, assumed her bonnet, and wandered forth amidst the sweets of her flower-garden, where we will consign her to the care of the ancient gardener; and while she is engaged with her pyrus japonica, and her different flowers and plants, apetalous, dipetalous, and angiomonospermous (for she was rather addicted to botany), we will take advantage of the magic tapestry which every author possesses, or the enchanted horse belonging to Prince Albou— something or other, and transport ourselves and the reader to Dane's Court, where the family was just sitting down to luncheon as our party arrived.

The said family consisted of Mr. and Lady Caroline St. Quentin, two sons, and a daughter. The eldest son George, *as* an eldest son, was of course nothing; the second, Horace, as a second son, had to look to a profession for his support, assisted by some three or four hundred

a-year which his elder brother did not spend: so much for a profession. The one he chose was the army, as not only there would be nothing to do, but he would have a good set of fellows to mess with instead of leading a stupid country life: he would wear a most splendid dress, being a Lancer; mount a pair of mustaches; and, being exceedingly fond of music, would have the advantage of a capital band. All this considered, he might be called fortunate in being a younger brother. Add to these advantages, he would, by an odd paradox, be enabled to look down upon those who were far above him, and cut those who would not perhaps notice him, if he even desired their society.

Augusta St. Quentin was at this time about sixteen; a fine, lively, we may say, indeed, wild girl. In complexion she was rather a brunette, but the colour of health and the glow of happiness in her beautiful cheeks relieved her countenance from the imputation of a foreign expression, which her laughing black eyes, and

the dark hair that clustered about her forehead in luxuriant curls, might otherwise have given it. Louisa Nugent and Augusta had often been taken for sisters; there was, indeed, a strong likeness between them, though Louisa, with her dark hair, possessed a complexion of the most brilliant fairness. Her friend's figure was, though beautifully proportioned, under the common size. In fact, Augusta St. Quentin was, in appearance and movements, a perfect fairy. All she did was well done; all she said, whether sensible or the reverse, had charms for every one who heard it. "Her very faults seemed virtues;" her every piece of extravagance found defenders rather than accusers.

The Dane's Court people, we have before observed, were at *vivres* when our visitors were announced. They all rose immediately to welcome them, and the captain advanced with an air and a grace to pay his *devoirs* to Louisa, whom he rather patronized, constituting himself a sort of beau, though assuming the privilege of

attending her or not, just as he pleased. Do not suppose, reader, that he was in love: far from it: Cupid seldom enters the dragoons, though Adonis may sometimes be found holding a commission in them. No; all he cared about in Louisa was her magnificent voice, which certainly was one of the finest in England. Before, however, the elegant Lancer could make his bow, the volatile Augusta had given the *accueil gracieux*, by springing into the arms of her fair friend.

"My dear, dear Louisa," exclaimed the happy girl, "what an age it is since I have seen you! You never come near me by any chance, and I have no horse to carry me to you."

"Why, where is Whisker?"

"Whisker? my own dear darling Whisker, is *hors de combat*. That horrid brother of mine, Horace, with his long legs, has given him a cut against a stone wall. The idea of fencing, you know, in July! I begin to believe what Colonel Cotton told me, that dragoons can never ride when they get into the country."

"I think I have shown that I can ride though, Miss Augusta," said the accused party: "any other man would have killed both himself and the horse at the leap I took; besides, the brute ran away with me; and all I had for it was to turn him over the wall to avoid being taken into the river."

"I won't have my horse abused, you naughty Horace! he is a darling, and never ran away with me in his life."

"You do not patronise these long persuaders though," said Hyde.

"Never mind, little Horacy Poracy," said Augusta, giving him her hand: "you are a good Horace, but you shan't have my Whisker again. You may make use of your own: perhaps they will carry you across the country; they are large enough."

"And ugly enough," added George.

The dragoon bore all this with an infinitely good grace.

"Louisa," said Augusta, suddenly changing the subject, "how can you look so beautiful? You have certainly got rouge on; I *must* kiss some of it off." And she tried to clasp her young friend in her arms.

Hyde, however, dexterously popped his head up under his sister's arm, and caught the kiss that was intended for a more feminine, though not a riper lip.

"Hyde, how dare you?" cried Miss St. Quentin: "now I don't like you. I declare I will not speak to you for a fortnight."

"Will you not?" said Hyde; "make it a week, and I will take half back;" and he attempted another.

"No, no, Master Hyde," said Louisa, preventing him: "one at a time, if you please."

"That's right, Nugent," said George St. Quentin; "I like to see girls cured of kissing each other; though I think it would

be but fair to let Louisa have her kiss after all. What say you, Louisa? shall I pay you?"

"No, I thank you," replied Louisa; "but Augusta may pay my brother with this whip, and give him the interest if she likes, which being all in the family will amount to the same thing."

Hyde begged to be excused.

The two papas were, during this time, engaged in the discussion of some parish business, which seemed to occupy all their attention. Lady Caroline had not made her appearance that morning, having a head-ache. Miss St. Quentin now recollected that it was time to propose some luncheon to her friends, and gave some "light refection" (a favourite term with old novelists,) to Louisa. Before she would allow her to eat one morsel however, she declared that a song must be sung. Louisa had no remedy but to submit, notwithstanding the unreasonableness of the request, considering her riding accoutre-

ments and the day, which was one of the hottest in July. She was therefore led away captive into the drawing-room, and sitting down to the instrument, sang *Je ne veux pas chanter*, to the infinite delight of all her hearers. Having performed her task, she was permitted to return to the luncheon-room, and receive her reward. Louisa, as a songstress, was singular in a particular point;—she was not gifted with a very voracious appetite. It certainly in some measure destroys the charm which has hovered around your heart, ears, and eyes, while the most melodious of voices, proceeding in a volume of delicious sound from a pair of lovely lips, has enraptured the auditors,-to behold this goddess, this immortal enchanting being, led into the supper-room, and devour a whole roast turkey, or the greater part of a game pie. But even this is pardonable; for we must consider that a good appetite is a sign of health, and the *artiste* has deserved what she receives, either the meed of praise or pies; but who can forgive a useless

member of society, that will neither sing, play, nor speak; or worse, one who speaks the whole evening folios of nonsense, while another is singing; and who afterwards refreshes herself, as she calls it, by an attack on all kinds of pastry and trashy trifles, as frothy and palling to the taste as her converse is to the sated ear? If a lady will eat supper, let it be some cold chicken, accompanied by a glass of Madeira; but let her not touch trifles and trashery. No one should be allowed supper, however, that talks nonsense, or that does not in some sensible manner earn her bread. We would have all fools and useless members of society turned into a sort of comfortably furnished barn, which should be attached to every party-giving house for the occasion. But then, you will say, if all the offenders heretofore mentioned were to be turned out, who would remain? Ourselves, for one party; but no matter, we should find *assez de monde*. Pardon our digression, gentle reader!

Louisa, we have said, was not a marvellous eater.

A proposal having been made and accepted, that the St. Quentins should come over to Nugent Hall, whether the Malmesbridges came or not, the visitors took their leave. The invitations to the other people were dispatched, and the Nugents proceeded on their return home.

"Hyde," said his father, as they rode slowly along the shady lane, "have you lately heard any thing of Frederick Burgoyne? or have you seen him since he was here when a boy? You used to be great friends."

"I have not seen him, Sir, since that time; but I hear he is at Oxford, and I am happy to say, at ———."

"I am glad you will be together. If he were in town, we might ask him down to meet all these people, but we will not interrupt his studies. Open that gate; we will make a short cut through the grounds. Ah! clever fellow!

clever fellow! Why do you not always ride with a hooked stick?"

"It is not considered the thing at Westminster," replied Hyde, as he at length succeeded in opening the gate.

"Pooh! nonsense! what conceit! I find you are just as great a set of puppies at Westminster as they were in my time, when hooked sticks and whips were *quite* 'the thing,'" said Mr. Nugent. "But you have left Westminster long enough to forget all its follies. You have already forgotten many of the valuable things you learned there, I dare say."

"Pardon me, Sir. 'Train a child up in the way he should go, and when he is old,' &c. &c., you know; therefore I do not patronize the hooked stick."

"But I do," said Mr. Nugent; "and I could answer your proverb with another."

"What may that be, Sir?" said Hyde, laughing.

"Why, that 'foolishness is bound in the

breast of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.'" And he made a slight cut at him with his stick.

"I thought," said Louisa, "it might be something about a bridle for the ass, &c."

On the appointed day, the St. Quentins made their appearance at Nugent Hall. Lady Caroline, whom we have not yet presented to the reader, was a high-born and high-bred woman of the world, warm neither in her affections nor her friendships. Still handsome and fascinating, her society was more sought by men than women, though neither liked her long. As to her own tastes, if she decidedly had any, they leaned strongly in favour of gentlemen's society. She always had a distrust of her own sex. She had, perhaps, experienced the hollowness of the friendship, if so it may be termed, which is early formed between girls at an age when romance constitutes the principal charm; and probably *her* friend might have found that their wishes were so congenial, that is, that in-

clinations and tastes led so exactly the same way, lighting on the same individual, that in the end they unavoidably clashed, and an immediate and eternal enmity was most likely sworn to all women. Still, with all this, Lady Caroline was of course perfectly lady-like and polite, though her contempt of the sex could not help showing itself, perhaps too often. Mrs. Nugent she rather liked, but she was almost a solitary exception; neither did she seek to prevent Augusta from enjoying the society of Louisa. She was a woman of a strong mind, which had been well cultured in her youth; and she found an ample source of amusement in literary pursuits, but still without the slightest taint of blueism. In the match between her and Mr. St. Quentin, there had been little love. He had married her for the sake of the connection,—a duke's daughter, without a very large fortune. She had been early attached to another, no matter whom

now; but that was not to be thought of; and at length she was prevailed on by her parents to accept the hand of her present husband, although her first love, true in his devotedness, had never married; and Lady Caroline, if it may be called a satisfaction, certainly had that of knowing that her false friend still remained single, having failed in decoying him into a marriage, who had never loved any but the one.

In addition to the St. Quentins, there were a Mrs. Markham, a rich and pretty widow, who had been staying with a friend in the neighbourhood; and her walking-stick, a Miss Bayley. Moyle was expected, but had not yet made his appearance. At last, when all the company were assembled in the drawing-room, dressed for dinner, in bounced Moyle *en costume de voyageur.*

"Welcome, Moyle, my boy!" said Mr. Nugent: "it is very good of you to come down on so short a notice: this proves that you

did not find us quite so cold as the river, when you were last with us."

"Ha, ha, ha! Faith, Sir," said he, laughing, as he wrung Mr. Nugent's hand with a true Hibernian grasp, "you may make yourself easy, make yourself easy on that score; for if I didn't drink whiskey enough last winter to qualify all the water in England, it's a wonder, then. I beg your pardon a thousand times, ladies and gentlemen, for having kept you waiting; but, Sir, the fact is, I got into the wrong coach this morning, not being well awake, and they carried me ten miles on the York road before I found out my mistake."

"Well, now you are here," said Mr. Nugent, "go and take off that emerald-coloured coat, and then we'll see what virtue there is in a haunch of venison and a glass of champagne. Hyde, show Moyle his room."

"Come along, Moyle, my boy!" said our hero, "and don't be long about your toilette;

for you need not flatter yourself that we shall wait for you."

"Who wants you? but never fear, old Hyde, you old rascal you! I'll be dressed time enough, and appear *selong lee coutume de pay*. You know I was in Paris last April for five weeks. Ogh by the powers, I can speak French like a Spanish calf——*Allamode de Paree*."

"So I perceive," said Hyde: "but come to your room; and I say, Moyle, there's a deuced nice widow staying here. Have at her, my boy!—two thousand a-year! good chance, eh! New approach at Castle Moyle, eh! hum! Didn't you say the old one, or the present one rather, leads through the farm-yard? What if she is a year or two older than you? But here you are, and now I'll leave you to your meditations, which I hope will be such as to make you tie a good neckcloth. Where the devil did you get that preposterous green-and-yellow one that you have on now?"

"Preposterous? It's the correct thing in town."

"Pardon me, pardon me, my dear fellow!" returned Hyde: "we have not lived so *very* long in the woods, either. But, Moyle, come to me in the drawing-room as soon as you are dressed, and I'll introduce you."

"That's right, that's right. There now, away wid you, and let me dress."

Hyde descended, and going between Mrs. Markham and Miss Bayley, entered into conversation. Narcissus in a short time joined them, and dinner at the same time was announced: Hyde introduced the young Irishman to both, but in the confusion the spinster fell to the lot of Moyle, while Hyde, with Mrs. Markham on one arm, and Augusta St. Quentin on the other, followed them into the dining-room. Augusta was not a little amused at learning the mistake of Narcissus, while she saw him making the agreeable to the sour-looking *cinquantenaire* opposite, who, all unused to

such court, tried to think her nose less red, and by biting her lower lip, to conceal the projecting tooth, which, however, would make itself visible notwithstanding all her efforts. It was not till Hyde, in pity for Moyle, asked Miss Bayley by her name to drink a glass of wine, that the last-mentioned lady discovered, from the change in Moyle's manner, that he was really not in love; and Moyle, rather vexed, threw something of an indignant glance across the table at young Nugent. However, it was not in his nature to be long angry, and a smile at the absurdity of the thing soon appeared on his countenance.

The fineness of the evening induced the party to propose a walk in the grounds; and the gentlemen had the good taste to prefer the society of the softer sex, in a ramble, to that of the bottle, and sitting long after dinner. Lady Caroline and Mrs. Nugent walked together; their lords also patronized each other: George St. Quentin led Mrs. Markham; and the young

people, among whom we must include the dragoon, were promiscuously grouped together. Moyle would gladly have joined the latter party, but Miss Bayley had again got hold of him, and he found she was not to be shaken off so easily.

Now was Augusta in her glory, running, jumping, flying; her every attitude displaying native and unstudied grace, and with her light figure bounding along like a young fawn. One moment she was here, another invisible; again she was with you, laughing and playing with the spirits of a girl of ten years old. This would, in fact, have been unpardonable in any other being but Augusta St. Quentin; but there was a certain fascination in all she did which carried its excuse along with it. Her mother in vain attempted to tame her, and she was obliged at length to give up the task as hopeless, trusting that her spirits would in time exhaust themselves. It must be recollected that the two families had been almost as it were brought up

together, and therefore Augusta felt that there was no more harm in thus giving a loose to her spirits, than if she had been only amongst her brothers. In all her whims and flights, she found a ready partaker in Hyde. At length, the aviary attracted the attention of the party; and Lady Caroline, gathering her daughter under her wing, succeeded in detaining her for a short time; it was, however, *but* for a short time.

"Augusta, you'll put yourself in a fever. I am excessively angry with you; you know Dr. Baillie was ——"

"You angry, my dear mamma?" said Augusta, looking up in her mother's face with a half smile.

"Yes, very angry, my love! I will not have you running about, and heating yourself like a foolish child. What must Mr. Nugent think of you?"

"Oh, I dare say he thinks I am a very wicked person. But did you say that was Dr.

Baillie? and why does he come down here in women's clothes?"

The mock simplicity with which Miss Bayley was turned into an M.D., was too much for those of the party who were listeners to this short colloquy. The gentlemen laughed, Lady Caroline looked displeased, and Augusta took the opportunity of breaking away from her mother, and, running down a serpentine walk, threw herself on the seat of a summer-house, not far from the borders of the lake we have before mentioned. Hyde called out to her that she had dropped something, but she heard not; and picking up the prettiest little garter in the world, he made a short cut through the wood, and entered the summer-house immediately after her.

"A prize! a prize!" cried he, holding up the lost treasure: "what am I to have for this?"

"Provoking creature! Give it to me directly, and go away."

"Not till I have been paid for finding it,"

replied our hero, snatching her hands, and imprinting a kiss upon her ruby lips.

On a sudden Augusta became thoughtful. "Hyde," said she, as he released her, "I am seriously angry with you."

Hyde laughed at the idea of her being serious about any thing. "No, you are not angry, are you? won't you forgive me? Is there any more harm in my kissing you now than there was the day before yesterday?"

"Yes, there is; but it is my own fault. Don't do so again, for mamma would be extremely vexed if she knew it, and I hate to conceal any thing from her."

"Well, I won't do so again then," replied young Nugent, taking her hand; "that is, till the next time."

"And that will never be," replied Augusta rather angrily, perceiving she was laughed at: "I shall turn over a new leaf, Mr. Hyde, and be serious, and then perhaps you will know how to respect me."

"Ha! ha! that is rather too good," returned

Hyde; but perceiving the young lady was really getting angry, he again took her hand; she, however, indignantly broke away from him, and joined Louisa, whom she saw approaching.

"You are a very pretty pair!" said the latter, when she came up: "what, quarrelling too? You seemed the best of friends five minutes ago: what has been the matter?"

"*Oh, Ma'amselle s' emporte,*" said Hyde.

"*J'ose dire que Monsieur a tort,*" replied Louisa: "but come, this is too absurd. I won't say 'kiss and be friends,' but shake hands." Augusta smiled, and held her hand out. Hyde threw off his hat, and kneeling most ridiculously at her feet, kissed the little finger of her glove.

"And now," said Louisa, "what has all this mighty quarrel been about?"

"Oh, nothing," replied Augusta.

"I will tell you," said Hyde: "I had the fortune (or misfortune, since it procured me a frown instead of a smile, as I expected) to find

an appendage of this young lady's which I had always thought indispensable till now; but I perceive she is walking with it in her hand instead of——I beg your pardon, but perhaps I am rather in the way: I'll send Moyle to you; he is just come from France, where the gentlemen understand better how to tie—shoestrings than they do in England. Adieu, I go to send Narcissus."

Hyde joined the other party, leaving Augusta and Louisa together, and we suppose the delicate silk stocking was again made to assume its proper place and tension, and confined round the taper leg by "the prettiest little garter in the world." But this is all a mystery of course: however, the ladies must agree that it was particularly well-bred of Hyde to go out of the way. As may be supposed, he took special care not to relieve Moyle of his lovely burthen. The pair were at this time deep in a discussion of—what book is it of the Paradise Lost? we forget—"On she came," &c., and

> Grace was in all her steps, Heaven in her eye,
> In every gesture dignity and love.

Miss Bayley recited the lines, but Moyle did not seem to feel the beauty or force of the passage; he was even ungallant enough to think "I wish you'd have the grace to leave me, Miss Bayley!"

Augusta and Louisa soon joining the rest of the party, the whole returned to the house, when tea and coffee having been dispatched, cards and music were introduced. A whist table occupied the widow and the maiden elderly, the host and Mr. St. Quentin. The ladies played against the gentlemen, the latter of whom were successful; for Miss Bayley was unfortunate, and Mrs. Markham marked nothing. Lady Caroline and Mrs. Nugent admired each other's bracelets, and their own white hands and wrists; while Louisa and Augusta charmed the remainder of the party with vocal and instrumental music. Louisa's voice was

superbe, magnifique; Augusta's was also very good, but not to be compared to her friend's. The harp and piano-forte were in requisition. Horace St. Quentin was a perfect master of music, and though not a music-master, quite a *fanatico*; he sang, played the violoncello, flute, hautboy, flageolet, &c., &c., and all to perfection. It was said of him that he called his dogs in the field by whistling a passage from Rossini to them; and to his credit be it spoken, his love of music had overcome the fear of ridicule, even from the gay fellows of the ——th Lancers. Hyde, devotedly fond of music, though he neither played nor sang, would listen delighted for hours to his sister or Augusta; and as he now leaned over the harp of the latter, he thought he saw a tear steal into her eye, which was unperceived to all but him. He tried by conversation to enliven her, but in vain; she was below concert pitch. The piece of music ended, which she had been playing; she rose and walked to the sofa, and seating herself by her mother, complained of

head-ache, which of course produced a lecture on the imprudence of taking such violent exercise, &c., &c., and an offer from Mrs. Nugent of lavender drops, and *all that*. But the malady was in her heart, and it was a good heart, one *comme il y en a peu;* though unfortunately her spirits generally got the better of her prudence.

The secession of Augusta was not noticed by her brothers, for Louisa having been requested by Horace St. Quentin to gratify him with some favourite song, Moyle took up the captain's flute, and accompanied her on it, "straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps," to the infinite horror of the captain, but the great amusement of his brother. Nature had, in one of her capricious moods, denied Moyle the slightest ear, while she bestowed upon him a deep love of music; he consequently played the flute to distraction, and with quite as great a brogue as he spoke.

Poor little Augusta! if the truth must be confessed, she was fond of Hyde; too much so,

alas! for her peace of mind; but she was now annoyed not only with him, but with herself also, about the foolish summer-house scene; and when she retired to rest, as she soon did, her pillow was wetted with her tears. But although still dissatisfied with herself, her conscience was too clear, her heart too pure, long to give her uneasiness; and her mind, fraught with the strongest resolutions not to throw herself again in the way of such adventures, she softly exclaimed, "Dear, dear Hyde, I cannot long be angry with you, so good and kind as you are!" and commending herself to the care of a higher Power, the innocent and beautiful girl dropped into a balmy slumber. Her mother made her room a visit by stealth before going to bed, and finding her in a sweet sleep, kissed her forehead and departed.

"She slept all dreamless;" happy they who can! The next morning she arose with the same buoyancy of spirits as ever, all uncomfortable feelings being dissipated with the shades of night.

The bright sun threw his glad beams upon her couch as she awoke; and she was dressed and down stairs, while the shadows of the trees upon hill and dale were yet long, and myriads of dew-drops still glittered on the grass. Early as she was, Louisa met her on the terrace, and both descended to the garden together, whose gravel-walks they paraded till Mr. Nugent summoned them in to breakfast.

At the Hall, one of the many comforts was, that you might do as you pleased. Breakfast was on the table from eight till twelve, or later if any body was so lazy as not to be down by that time; and at whatever hour you made your appearance, you ran no risk of being called the late Mr. So and So, or asked what had prevented your appearing earlier, or even stood the least chance of an angry look from the lady of the house, ill-disguised by an attempted smile. No; there was your breakfast; you required no one to wait for you; and as nobody sat in that room during the day, you inconvenienced no one, you

disturbed no one. Lady Caroline was not an early riser, and she felt as much at home at Nugent Hall as she could possibly do at Dane's Court. She seldom came down before twelve; her husband had always finished his breakfast by nine. He was generally out the rest of the day, till it was time to dress for dinner; and the first sight he obtained of Lady Caroline at Dane's Court, from seven o'clock in the morning, was at seven o'clock in the evening, when she placed herself at the side of her table, for she never assumed the head.

Hyde and Augusta met in the hall before they entered the breakfast-room. One expressive look passed between them as they shook hands; and the young gentleman complimented the young lady on the beauty of her looks, which he compared to the rose she held in her hand. Breakfast over, a ride was the order of the day; but where? Whisker was in a state of convalescence when Augusta left Dane's Court: she was anxious for his complete restoration to

health, and a visit to the invalid horse was therefore agreed upon by the youthful party. Before they set out, however, a tour of the flower gardens, and an inspection of the green-house and hot-house gave Mrs. Nugent an opportunity of gratifying her company and self by the rare display of plants, exotic and indigenous, with divers hard names and high-sounding titles, which she exhibited to their delighted eyes and edified ears. The young ladies retired to their respective rooms to assume their habits; the young gentlemen visited the stables, and ordered the horses; and the riding party having at length taken their way towards Dane's Court, the other ladies were left in the delightful occupation we have already assigned them, while Mr. Nugent and his remaining guest started upon a less sweet undertaking, namely, a visit to the farm-yard, where, in addition to a huge Otaheite sow and litter of pigs, a very interesting method of preparing manure was to be inspected, discussed, and of course approved. Oh, the exquisite

delights of a farmer's life; particularly where the amateur has been bred up in the polish, and with the fine feelings of higher society! How a man can prevail upon himself to desert the library for the cow-house, the drawing-room for the farm-yard, has often been a matter of astonishment to us. But astonishment becomes sympathy when we hear of what has sometimes been our fate: a casual visitor, by no means addicted to agricultural pursuits on "the breeding of stock," compelled to follow the uncompassionating high-priest of Ceres, (not to mention other less delicate goddesses,) who leads his victim through an area of filth, wading at each step up to the ancles in mire, at the imminent peril of losing his life through some untractable bull or vicious cow. And for what? why to poke the too sensitive nose over a horrid pig-sty, or to enter an Augean edifice, where you are expected to derive as much interest from the information that a certain ox is supposed to be of such a weight, and experience as great delight from the

feel of his fat flanks, as you would from that of a delicate lady's white hand. Heaven defend us from the like!

Let us leave these two gentlemen in the farm-yard, and join the happy, happy party, as they start upon their ride: theirs were the elastic spirits of youth and health, and the joyous, careless age, before "the world and the world's ways" had vitiated or saddened their glad hearts.

Louisa was mounted on her high-bred horse; and she being the only lady-rider in the family, the Nugent Hall stables could produce no horse exactly calculated to carry the fair Augusta. The least spirited, or rather the one which had lately had most work, was however equipped with a side-saddle; but Augusta, being an experienced horsewoman, would not have considered herself in danger, if mounted on the most mettlesome hunter in the stud; and the fears of the gentlemen were therefore not excited.

For a time they got on very well. Moyle had devoted himself to Louisa, though he had some

difficulty in keeping the honoured station by her side, for the St. Quentins were also her slaves; and their sister being the only other lady in company, whom, by the bye, Hyde had secured to himself, the young Hibernian had often the mortification of finding his observations unattended to, or the greater indignity of being quite eclipsed by the *nonchalance* and cool unceremony of the Lancer captain.

Having at length got upon an open piece of ground on the brow of a green hill adjoining the common, the party put their horses into a canter along the flat surface of the eminence. The high-fed animal upon which Augusta was mounted, scarcely feeling her feather-weight, got immediately into the greatest spirits, and making two or three caracoles, bounded off like an arrow from a bow. For a short distance, the whole party accompanied her; but soon perceiving that she was unable to restrain her horse, they pulled up. Hyde alone kept close by her side, and attempted to seize the bridle, and thereby

save her from the destruction which seemed to threaten her; but Augusta waved him off, begging he would stop. His anxiety for her safety, however, and the inconsiderate warmth of youth, prevailed over her better directions: they kept close to each other for two or three miles; and the rest of the party, in a state of perturbation and alarm, which on the part of Louisa was agony, stood watching their course. Louisa put her hand before her eyes as Augusta, with the speed of a whirlwind, was borne down the grassy slope. In a few seconds, however, she had safely reached the plain below, and the horse turning carried her the whole length of the extensive open ground. The riders, keeping side by side, gave it all the appearance of a race; and the parties, had they not, as friends and relations, experienced the alarm for Augusta which was inseparable from the danger of the poor girl's situation, might have confessed that they had never beheld any thing more beautiful than the emulation which seemed

to subsist between the horses, and the admirable skill displayed by the riders; for the commanding station of the spectators gave them an opportunity of beholding the whole career of the actors in this scene. From the presence of mind which had never deserted Augusta, she was enabled to keep her seat, and by giving the horse his head, let him tire himself out; thus easing the apprehensions of those who were looking on. Moyle was the only one of the party who spoke, the others being too nearly concerned in the safety of Augusta to give utterance to a syllable.

"Look," said he to Louisa, kindly endeavouring to comfort her; "look, dear Miss Nugent! how she sits like a piece of the horse! Don't now, don't make yourself uneasy about it: see there, how she turns him, and winds him! Elegant, elegant, by Jove!" exclaimed he, in seeming ecstasy at this specimen of equitation: "no fear! no fear! she'll bring him to his senses. Aha! I'm right glad to see that; she's turned

him into the ploughed field. There! she begins to whip! Now's the time; give it him! give it him! take the change out of him. He 's gone for his own pleasure, now make him go for yours!"

And in fact, Augusta throughout had displayed infinite presence of mind. Finding the horse begin to flag, she gave him the whip, and kept him at the top of his speed, turning into a ploughed field, at the entrance of which Hyde had pulled up, and allowed his fair companion to pursue her course alone. Having made the tour of the said field, and now possessing the entire command of her steed, Augusta again joined the party unhurt, attended by her faithful cavalier, who was nevertheless reproved for his want of thought in accompanying the wild horse; thus adding fuel to fire. Her friends rode down to Augusta, and met her on the plain: the usual congratulations upon her escape, and sympathetic expressions on the alarm she had innocently caused them, were poured forth on all

sides, and a return to the Hall was proposed by Louisa, which her friend would not however listen to.

"No, no," said she, smiling; "the pleasantest part of the ride is to come yet, I trust. I was a little frightened at first, but this fiery Pegasus has only given me a greater desire to ride my own dear, dear Whisker again. Sweet little pet! *he* never ran away with me; did he, Horacy? He only runs away with dragoons, who don't know how to ride him. Did you think you were a sister out of pocket, my most affectionate brothers? I think I beat you in style, Hyde."

"No, no, we were neck and neck the whole way; were we not, Moyle?" said young Nugent.

"By my faith," replied Moyle, "I thought you would have both been neck and heels into the gravel-pit at the foot of the hill; but you turned in good time. Upon my conscience, Miss St. Quentin, I never saw such horseman-

ship as you showed us,—in England, that is. I wishst I saw you with the Kilkenny hunt."

"I thank you for your good wishes and opinion," said Augusta: "but which of us, do you think, had the advantage?"

"Faith, Hyde was last at first, though you were first at last, therefore I think you beat him clean, barring the time you didn't run together in the ploughed field."

"All of which is decidedly in my favour, Mr. Moyle," said Augusta, laughing, "independently of Hyde's having pulled up before he got to the winning-post, which would have lost him the race at any rate."

"I will not allow this Irishman to know any thing about English racing," said Hyde; "therefore we will try our speed again."

"Agreed," said Augusta.

"You will do no such thing, my very good friends!" interrupted Louisa: "Augusta has had quite racing enough for one day."

"When I get Whisker over," observed Miss

St. Quentin, shaking her beautiful head, and looking at Hyde, "you will see who is the distanced person."

The party moved on at a canter towards Dane's Court, making a short cut through a narrow coppice by a sort of green lane, which admitted but one equestrian at a time. Louisa led the way, and upon coming to the skirt of the wood, a sudden and slippery descent caused her horse to fall, and throw his lovely rider: but let not a sneer be cast at the cavalry department of Nugent Hall. The stud was as good as the county produced, but the best horse in the world may slip upon grass in dry weather: we have seen one or two very bad falls occasioned to excellent riders and horses by going fast over the ground in summer.

But is there no cavalier, the while, gallant enough to assist Miss Nugent to rise? Oh yes, reader; George, and Horace, and Moyle, and Hyde, had all thrown themselves from their steeds to help the beautiful Louisa, who for-

tunately escaped, at the expense of showing an excessively neat ancle by the fall. The horse also was unhurt.

" I wish you joy of your safe delivery, Miss Nugent," exclaimed Moyle, as he adjusted her habit, and placed her foot in the slipper. Louisa smiled and blushed. She and Augusta rode on, and by putting their horses into a brisk pace, escaped hearing the laugh which this *equivoque* of Moyle's caused amongst the other gentlemen.

" Why, then," said Moyle, looking from one to the other in astonishment, " what's the matter now? What ails you all, gentlemen? Sure I spoke English."

" Nothing ails *us*," replied Horace St. Quentin; " and as for the speaking, I think you must have spoken Irish, for the ladies did not seem to comprehend you."

" Is it not comprehend *me*? Faith, Mr. Captain, I can teach you English I believe, with all your fine speaking, and your *ees*, and

your *as* instead of saying *a* and *ah* as you ought. But there never was an Englishman yet who could speak his own language."

"I cry your pardon, gentle sir," said the captain, with a look of infinite contempt; "you may, for all I know, have given lectures on the mysteries of Lucina, or written volumes on the art. I dispute it not."

"O, bother!" exclaimed Mayle, impatiently; "I'm no match for you at high Dutch." And he stuck the spurs into his horse, darting off to join the ladies, and leaving the gentlemen to enjoy their joke, the meaning of which was utterly beyond his comprehension.

"By my honour, Miss St. Quentin," said he, "I can't make head or tail of those blades, nor that queer brother of yours, the Captain; though he's a very good fellow if he'd only speak English." Hyde, riding up on the other side of Augusta, prevented the answer, or question, that was ensuing, and obliged Moyle to turn for consolation to Louisa, to whom he had

no sooner made a remark than Horace rode in between him and the fair siren, with as much *nonchalance* as if he did not know there was such a person in the world as Narcissus Moyle, still less that he was then in company, and least of all that he had spoken to him not five minutes before.

"Why then, Captain St. Quentin," said the young Hibernian, no whit abashed, "I was just telling your sister and Miss Nugent here, what a queer blade you were."

To this gratuitous piece of information, the captain answered not. He had in fact determined, upon the first sight of Moyle, to use him for his pleasure when it suited him, and to cut him when he chose; or when the other put himself too forward, resolved that such a tiger should not have the honour of his notice, except when a fit of the spleen required something to amuse him, and then, *pour se desennuyer*, he might patronize the wild beast. He therefore commenced a disquisition upon the music of the

last opera with Louisa; and his brother George, with more good breeding, entered into conversation with the straight-forward and open-hearted Moyle. Augusta, in the mean time, kept the talk up with Hyde, quizzing him occasionally in that good-humoured and easy way, which, without wounding the feelings, amuses, while it draws closer to you the person who is the object of such innocent *badinage*.

Arrived at Dane's Court, an inquiry was instituted as to the health of Whisker, and the *bulletin* of the day pronouncing him to be in a progressive state of recovery, and that two days more would enable him to carry his fair mistress without difficulty, the groom was ordered to bring him over the next morning to Nugent Hall, whither the party now returned.

The respective lady mothers, when they heard the chapter of accidents recounted, declared their daughters should proceed on no more wild-goose expeditions, nor again ride forth without the superintending arm of some sage person,

such as Mr. Nugent or Mr. St. Quentin. The two gentlemen in question, however, declared against such an act being passed; and moved as an amendment, that the mothers themselves should mount into their saddles, and by their presence awe the horses or their riders into steadiness. Affairs, therefore, at the end of the debate, promised to wear the same aspect, as regarded the young people, as when it began; and Augusta, as she left the room to take off her habit, deprecated the intention Mrs. Nugent expressed, of begging Miss Bayley to join the riding party, for Whisker, she protested, would certainly take fright the moment he saw her face.

CHAP. III.

She would stretch out her empty hands to bless,
Or lift them up to pray;
But, alack! to lighten man's distress,
They moved no other way.

BALLAD.

IN this manner a fortnight passed off agreeably enough; during which time Moyle, having changed his point of attack to the real widow from the supposed one, had, as every one thought, made great progress in his courtship, although no one but the parties concerned could tell for certainty whether the young Irishman was in jest or earnest, so well did he cover his love battery with the voluble nonsense he could on occasion pour forth. Deeds however, not words, at length convinced the lookers-on

that the game had meaning, for Narcissus was discovered one morning in the green-house on his knees, kissing the blooming widow's little finger, though shrouded as he thought from observation by the broad-leaved exotics which spread their treacherous arms but to betray. Horace St. Quentin was the Marplot who made the discovery; he, however, retreated unseen, though ruthlessly determined to enjoy the joke of letting the precious news remain no longer a secret. Horace, however, had no bad feeling in making this communication; he was only actuated by a little love of innocent scandal and harmless mischief, almost excusable in a young and thoughtless dragoon. Moyle and he had, after the few first days, besides, come to a better understanding with each other, and Horace had condescended to be as intimate as he had at first intended to be high. Louisa seemed not the least jealous of Moyle's defection, and the whole party, in fact, knowing him to be a thoroughly well-principled young man, though not overburthened

with money, thought if Mrs. Markham could be prevailed upon to listen to his addresses, and a match brought about, the couple bade fair to live happily enough together. No obstacle was thrown in the way of their meeting, therefore, and they were by these means enabled to see so much of each other, that if they entered unadvisedly upon the holy state of matrimony, they would have themselves only to blame. Who is there but must confess that a fortnight's *séjour* in the country makes a person more intimate with another who may be staying in the same house, than months of mere visitings and meetings at balls and parties in a large town?

Augusta St. Quentin continued the same wild girl as ever, and in her numerous rides and rambles Hyde was generally her beau. Louisa and her friend were fond of sketching from nature, and in their walks for this purpose before breakfast, our hero invariably accompanied them. We will not say that the attraction of Augusta St. Quentin did not go far in rousing him

from his couch at an earlier hour than he was wont; but his conscience was glad of the excuse of her positive order, delivered over night, to attend with her sketch-book and pencils at half an hour after sun-rise, when he generally found the two young ladies ready and waiting to set out. As Hyde did not draw, he had nothing to do when they had arrived, and seated themselves at the spot whence the sketch was to be taken, but amuse his fair companions with sallies of nonsense, which were often pointed with flashes of real wit; or to annoy Augusta and his sister with interruptions, when he required something to amuse himself.

Meantime, the Malmesbridges had sent an excuse. They were on the point of setting out, when Mr. Nugent's invitation arrived, for Capel Barons, a seat of the Marquis's in the north; but they begged that they might be permitted to make their visit next year in their way down to the sea-side. The Rochdales were consequently not asked, nor had Mr. Nugent

any opportunity of seeing them for a long time, as they intended going abroad for three years at the close of the summer.

Hyde expressed his regrets that he should not see his friend Adonis Millefleurs, a younger son of Lord Rochdale's, who was with him at Westminster.

"I doubt whether you would have seen him," said Mr. Nugent, "even had the Rochdales come, as he was gazetted the other day for a Hussar regiment; and you may be very certain that he is too much taken up with the ideas inseparable from the wish to join and display his peacock plumage, to think of coming down with his father and mother to vegetate at Nugent Hall."

"How very handsome he must look in his regimentals!" observed Louisa.

"Too effeminate ever to look like a soldier," replied Mr. Nugent, "even with mustaches, which he must have purchased, as well as his cornetcy."

Lady Caroline asked if he was the very beautiful boy who was staying with the Nugents some few years before.

"The same," replied Mrs. Nugent: "his sister and himself are so much alike, that Hyde prevailed upon Lady Jane Millefleurs to dress her brother up in some of her own clothes, and the young gentleman was presented to Lord St. Columb, with whom the cheat passed off so well, that he afterwards sat next the real Lady Jane at dinner without having been conscious of any trick. Positively, we were ourselves under some doubt, when they afterwards appeared together dressed nearly in the same style, as to which was the lady and which the gentleman. A little awkwardness in the curtsy, and in sitting down, however, soon discovered the impostor."

We had forgotten to tell our readers that Lady Wetherby's arrival was to be expected, an intimation to this effect having reached Nugent Hall; but from the fact of her travelling with

her own horses, and the carriage being some thirty years old, the journey, not immediately determined upon, had, when resolved, taken some time to accomplish; and to spare the antiquities which drew this frail antique, easy stages were the order of the day, or rather of the week nearly, which was spent in achieving the Wetherby's *progress* to the Nugents.

The day of her arrival, Mr. Nugent, with his friend Mr. St. Quentin, were as usual walking over the farm, and discussing the relative merits of Swedish turnips and oil-cake, or Sir John Sinclair's last new plough. The ladies were at their work in the drawing-room, entertaining each other with that light species of conversation with which ladies so well know how to wile away the vacant hours, and which, like Penelope's woof, "never ending, still beginning," is but achieved one day to be begun the next; for I have never observed much difference in the subjects with which half-a-dozen ladies sitting in conclave over their work, or the books which

they read not, in a well-furnished and elegant drawing-room, regale each other's ears. Their friends or neighbours are generally pulled to pieces with as much grace and facility as the few rows of knitting which have been put in with green instead of purple, a circumstance that will sometimes happen through inadvertency to the most thorough proficient; while their tongues are going as fast as their white and delicate fingers, the diamond rings on which are only surpassed in brilliancy by their loadstars of eyes. Thus were the ladies occupied at Nugent Hall, Lady Caroline excepted, who was listlessly turning over the pages of the latest publication Hookham's afforded, while her graceful figure reclined at length upon a *chaise longue*, when the equipage of Lady Wetherby drove up to the door.

The young men after a ride were lounging about the grounds, and contented themselves with viewing from afar the mighty machine, under the weight of which the earth groaned

and trembled, as it rumbled on towards the Hall, freighted with many huge trunks, and an ancient serving man, who seemed vieing with the gorgon of a maid, which should wear the most puritanical countenance. Her ladyship descended amidst, not a flourish of trumpets, but a Babel-like noise occasioned by a parrot, dog, and cat, without which she never travelled; and though of these three the former only possessed speech or language, yet their voices were all heard together; for far from living together in harmony, the dog and cat were engaged in a ceaseless warfare, the noise of which was always enhanced by Discord clapping her wings for the victorious, screaming and chuckling, while she turned upon her perch with an air of infinite importance. Besides this *ménagerie* of living things, the old vehicle disgorged itself of divers bags and band-boxes, a chocolate-pot, a large Henry's Bible with a magnificent binding, a wooden case said to contain a bottle of the elixir of life, *eau de vie d'Andaye*, and some

thing enclosed in a green-baize cover, a mystery to the vulgar. From the roof was taken the imperial with its canvass cover, which seemed to have seen much service, and was, like the carriage, as Moyle observed, "a devilish rum concern."

Lady Wetherby stood in the hall till every thing was safely brought in; and as Mrs. Nugent did not choose to go thither to receive her, she was unattended save by the servants. Never handsome, she now showed pale and harassed from the effects of the journey, and her personal appearance was by no means improved by the dinginess of her apparel, "a customary suit of solemn black," which she had never put off since her poor dear Sir Wm. Wetherby's death. He, indeed, was more to be pitied living than dying; and if hearts do really break, "poor dear Sir William's" was broken by this harpy. It must be confessed there are few situations more miserable than that in which a man is placed, who, having married an ill-tem-

pered and under-bred woman for her fortune, hopes each winter will take her off, though she still lives on to plague herself and friends, most of whom, if she ever had any sincere ones, she is sure to outlive. Heaven defend us from such an awful fate!

At length, Lady Wetherby suffered herself to be ushered into the drawing-room, where Mrs. Nugent received her as kindly as she could; but her Ladyship was rather annoyed at not having been met in the hall; and as she flung herself down on a sofa with a degree of *pesanteur* which threatened destruction to its cracking frame, she replied with an ill grace to the inquiries of Mrs. Nugent, who was not very solicitous about the answer, as to her health and journey.

"Ugh!" said she, "I'm tired to death; and the roads are so bad that I feared my springs would break. They used not to be so in my younger days; but every thing seems to be altered for the worse; even civility and good manners have deserted the present generation,

or I might have had somebody to help me out of the carriage. And those peacocks of yours at the lodge,—where 's Harry?—those peacocks of yours,—fourteen of them they tell me you 've got,—kept up such a screaming while the people opened the gate, that I was in dread my horses would have taken fright, and run away."

" No fear of that," thought Mrs. Nugent.

" And their noise has made me quite deaf."

" Rather hard to make my peacocks suffer for the sins of your parrot!" again thought the lady of the house.

" Whom have you got here?" continued Lady Wetherby, pointing all round with her cane, and keeping it elevated a second or two, when on accomplishing its round, the nether gold end was directed towards Lady Caroline St. Quentin.

" This is Lady Caroline St. Quentin," said Mrs. Nugent, " to whom permit me to introduce Lady Wetherby."

Lady Caroline scarcely deigned an inclina-

tion of the head, and resumed her book. Lady Wetherby bent low; she always did at the shrine of rank or riches.

"And where's Miss Louisa? Loui, you undutiful girl, why don't you come and speak to your aunt?"

Louisa advanced, and a kiss was inflicted. This looked well for the diamond ear-rings.

"And who's this, and that, and that?" asked Lady Wetherby, pointing to the three others.

Mrs. Nugent introduced them.

"Well, I do think Harry might have come to help me out of the carriage!" resumed the old lady with a grunt; "but it's no matter; it's the way of the world. People may take care of themselves when they get old; but it was never the case before Harry was married."

Mrs. Nugent scarcely knew what to reply to this ungracious speech; her spirit was getting up; but she made allowances for age and acrimony, and curbing a more intemperate reply, said something in excuse of her husband.

"Oh, it's of no consequence," said Lady Wetherby.

Augusta was summoned to attend her mother, who, quite horrified at this piece of ill-breeding, had withdrawn to her own room.

Mr. Nugent soon after entered; the expected apologies were made; and her ladyship in a short time found herself in rather a better humour.

"And where's that pickle, Hyde?" said she, after some few other questions had been asked, in a sort of inquisitorial manner, which Mr. Nugent could ill brook: "I am afraid Westminster has spoiled him; at least, young George Maskwell, who was a friend of his at school, told me he was turning out very badly."

"Hyde will be much obliged to Mr. Maskwell I have not the least doubt," said the father of our hero, with rather more warmth than might have been prudent towards a rich old aunt.

"Oh, I dare say you and Mrs. Nugent think

him perfection; but Maskwell could tell you both of some fine pranks of his; and if he did, it would be from pure friendship."

"I have not the least doubt of it," returned Mr. Nugent; "but if Mr. Maskwell waits till I ask him, it will be some time before he makes any communication to me upon the subject."

"You used to allow him a great deal too much money at school, Harry; and, I suppose, never made him give you an account of how it was spent."

"I would rather he had thrown it over Westminster-bridge," replied Mr. Nugent warmly, "unless I wished to make him a liar or a hypocrite; for *few* boys *can* recollect how every farthing is spent, and *none* will confess candidly if it is thrown away, as it generally is. No, no, I always gave him good advice before he left home after the holydays, upon this very subject; and I trusted to his honour, as I told him, that he would not make a bad use of his money. Nor do I believe he ever gave me reason to repent

this line of conduct. But I am glad to see you looking so well after your journey, Ma'am: you shall have your old room, and will be quite as much at home, I trust, as in Portland-place."

The conclusion of this speech tended to allay the incipient storm, which the first part had caused to gather; its louring signs upon the brow of the Wetherby giving portentous intimation that all was not right within. Mr. Nugent, however, seized the moment to throw in a sugar-plum; and the hostess following it up with some other dexterous little piece of flattery, they sent the old lady off to her room in something approaching to good humour.

When the party had assembled in the drawing-room before dinner, Hyde took an opportunity of paying his respects to his aunt. The manifest improvement in our hero's appearance, and the difference between his boyish deportment when at Westminster, and his air and manner now that he had started into man, not

a little surprised and pleased her ladyship; and the scale was evidently turned in his favour, notwithstanding the kind information of Mr. Maskwell.

The change in her ladyship's opinion of Hyde was very apparent; not so the advances she made in the affections of the latter, who found it impossible to conquer the rooted dislike he had taken to his aunt, from the very commencement of their intercourse, and which was not likely to be at all softened by the insight his rising years had given him into the sordid passions of her soul, or the recollection, not weakened by time, of the ill-natured, malevolent temper and disposition, she had displayed towards him while a boy, in all its undisguised ferocity. However, on the present occasion, he was not so absurd as to show any vindictive spirit, or to quarrel with an old woman, to whose large property it was generally believed his father was the heir. "So far had discretion fought with nature."

Lady Wetherby retired early in the evening, fatigued and peevish. The young party openly showed their delight at her departure ; the elder branches were perhaps no less pleased, although they restrained their satisfaction within due bounds. Augusta went sailing round the room in a waltz by herself, wherein Moyle essayed to join ; but falling over two chairs, and nearly upsetting a chess-table, at which were seated, in sober sadness, Hyde and Miss Bayley,—he was foiled in his attempt, to the great amusement of most of the party, but especially of Augusta, who indulged in an absolute peal of laughter, which nothing but the softness of her voice, and the brilliancy of her eyes, could have rendered pardonable. With infinite grace, she pursued her waltz to the music of her own sweet voice, the laughter having ceased; and Moyle at length was obliged to be satisfied with her hand in a quadrille, which Mrs. Markham, with great good humour, and a most brilliant finger, correct ear, and in excellent time, played for the young party, into

which, by the bye, were pressed Mrs. Nugent, and the unfortunate Miss Bayley.

Hyde having quitted his late partner when the quadrille finished, crossed quickly over to Augusta, and proposed a waltz; Horace secured Louisa, and Mrs. Markham made music for them, which had been as excellent as that of the quadrille, but for Moyle's flute obligato that effectually marred it. Our hero, however, took advantage of the screamings *in alt* of the unmusical Irishman, horrid as those of Lady Wetherby's parrot,—to talk nonsense unrestrained to the willing ear of Augusta. A race was during this waltz resolved on; and in a kind of cryptological language, which they had established between themselves, Hyde communicated to his partner that he had in a walk through the grounds again found something of hers, which he refused to give up without a suitable reward. Augusta in vain asked what it was; Hyde would not tell. "It is something of the greatest value, to me at least," said he with a smile.

"I shall tell mamma of this," said Augusta; "and she will make you give it up."

"What is all that plotting about?" said Lady Caroline, as the waltz ended.

"Why, mamma, Hyde——"

"Ah!" said Hyde holding up his finger, "will you, you little ——"

"Hyde, mamma," continued Augusta, looking archly at her late partner, and baffling all his attempts at interruption; "Hyde has got——"

"You shall not, Augusta——"

"Hyde has taken it into his head, that I can ride no horse but my own, and I mean to show him that I can, by riding against him to-morrow on the chestnut, that I gave such a gallop to the other day."

"One way of convincing him, however," said Lady Caroline, "that of riding against him!"

"Psha, mamma! you know nothing of horses or racing!"

"Nor do I wish you to know any thing about them, at least as to racing," replied her mother;

" besides, what has Mr. Nugent done, that you should ride against him?"

" Oh, mamma, you know what I mean; but you always will take every thing *au pied de la lettre.*"

" I thought you told me I knew nothing of the matter, this instant?"

" How provoking you are, mamma!"

" Augusta, Augusta!—But without further parley I forbid all racing. I shall not trust you to Master Hyde's care any more. He may break his own neck if he pleases."

" *Bien obligé!*" said Hyde.

" Yes, you wild one, you may break your own neck, but I will not have my daughter's risked any more."

" That's rather hard," observed Augusta; " but I may ride my own horse, I suppose?"

" But not race him," returned Lady Caroline. Augusta now went up to Mr. Nugent, and begged he would take her part against her mother.

"A very pretty request!" said Mr. Nugent: "and what am I to expect in my own family afterwards? Rebellions and mutinies without end. No, no, my dear Augusta," continued he, having heard the conversation between Lady Caroline and her daughter; "I am so much inclined to vote with ministers on this occasion, that I shall give my support to Lady Caroline, and say that I think she is right in prohibiting you from racing."

"Oh, you are quite incorrigible, Mr. Nugent! I see I must look for help elsewhere."

"Your father will certainly give his vote against the measure," replied he.

"Well then I must call upon Mrs. Nugent for support."

"You have as little chance there; or with Miss Bayley, or Mrs. Markham.—Lady Wetherby I am not so certain about."

"But I am," returned Augusta laughing; "I will not apply to her, at least."

"But seriously, my dear girl," said Mr. Nugent, "racing is not the thing for a young lady. Your 'Whisker colt' might do very well, and I have no doubt of your capability; but my horses are all too highly fed, and get too little work, to submit to the control of a female hand."

"My horse is not starved, Mr. Nugent."

"Nor worked," observed that gentleman gravely.

"I won't say any thing about that," replied Augusta.

"But I will," said her father joining them; "for if Whisker eats more than any horse in the stable, he certainly has twice as much to do."

"You stingy papa!"

The racing having been thus negatived, Augusta was obliged to submit; Lady Caroline had commenced a game at piquet with Hyde; some music ensued; which finished, the house

adjourned at eleven o'clock. The next day being the Sabbath, the guests, save Lady Wetherby, prepared for church: she, however, had lately turned saint, and borrowing Mr. Nugent's horses, set out for the nearest Methodist chapel, four miles and a half from the Hall. The parish church (an interesting object on such a beautiful Sunday as the one in question) might be gained by a short walk through the grounds: but the established house of prayer, and the excellent and able rector, were deserted for a closely-stuffed chapel, teeming with frowsy artisans, which on a hot day in July made it not the most agreeable place in the world; and a snuffling hypocrite of an eclectic preacher, self-styled and self-elected, who vociferated his vain repetitions till he nearly "split the ears of the groundlings." It happened that a charity sermon was that day delivered in the chapel, styled, as it showed by an inscription over the door, "A Refuge for the Godly," though the

unfortunates who sought the refuge which this intimation held out, were told by its minister that they stood no chance of any thing but damnation. This charity sermon was more than Lady Wetherby had expected: however, she was obliged to conform to custom; and to do the preacher justice, he had made one or two appeals to the hearts of his congregation which the most stony felt the effects of; and had he ended when this feeling was ripe, the collection would have been about twice as large as it turned out; yet his overweening vanity would not permit him to leave off with what had been an excellent and striking conclusion; a happy chance hit, and forcible appeal. No, he thought to make good better; and instead of letting well alone, and seizing the auspicious moment to conclude, he proceeded in a drawling tone for a quarter of an hour longer; and as a sequel to his sermon, poured forth a stormy prayer. He had perhaps not heard, yet the thought must

surely have struck him, even though unadorned by the sublime language of a master poet, that

> —— Sighs low breathed
> Unutterable, which the Spirit of prayer
> Inspires, part wing'd for heaven with speedier flight
> Than loudest oratory.

At one time during the sermon, her ladyship had resolved to contribute five pounds; but, alas! the minister, forgetting his former trade of blacksmith, had also forgotten to strike while the iron was hot; and Lady Wetherby, in common with numbers of the congregation, had felt her zeal cool proportionately with the discourse (not so her person); and as the powers of eloquence seemed to fail the preacher, her heart of grace and charity also failed, and her generous feeling retrograded by pounds, till at length half crowns, and after them visionary shillings, passed in pale array before her mind's eye. A shilling, therefore, she resolved to give, hoping,

in the rapid succession of chinks at the chapel door, it might be by some taken for a sovereign. She was besides not quite satisfied with merely getting her own again, as they, who pity the poor, are told to expect; she required interest for her money.

At dinner Lady Wetherby made objections to the hot and well-dressed dishes, which, however, like the school-boy and the apples, she thought it no harm to partake of, since the mischief was done; but she requested, as a particular favour, Mr. Nugent would not have any thing but cold meats at his table on future Sundays, as the servants, she observed, ought to be allowed their Sabbath to themselves; forgetting that she had herself given, not only Mr. Nugent's servants, but also his cattle, the unnecessary trouble of conveying her to a place of worship four miles off, and the consequent labour attendant upon the expedition. In the evening she was as disagreeable as could well be, breaking up a harmless game of chess in

which Louisa and Moyle were engaged, and unceremoniously ordering Augusta to stop, when she, having sat down to the piano-forte, began to sing, " We' re a' noddin."

" There," said her ladyship, as she placed with great labour a huge folio Bible before the young lady, opened at the Song of Solomon: " There, that is what you should be singing, Miss, not that profane ballad, that *nee naw*;" and she mimicked Augusta, to the great amusement of the young people, who with difficulty restrained their mirth within the bounds of good breeding. Augusta started back at the sight of the task which was imposed upon her with a well-feigned tragic action of affright; and exclaiming that she should want assistants, she called the rest of the party.

" What," said she, " will none of you come? Then I advise you to go for your night-caps, for I promise you there is more here than I can get through before day-light."

Hyde was so imprudent as to laugh. Lady

Wetherby took off her spectacles; and depositing them in her pocket, from the vasty deep of which it was said she could call spirits of a less unyielding nature than those of Owen Glendower, looked steadily in our hero's face for a few seconds, and disdaining further converse with such an unrighteous set, she rang, ordered her man and maid to be sent into her room to prayers, and left the party to their meditations without vouchsafing them a good night.

Now there are some passages in the Song of Solomon, which, although typical allusions, many mothers would not exactly wish their daughters to make a study, far less to sing before a number of young men; and Lady Caroline could not forbear expressing aloud her displeasure at the liberty Lady Wetherby had taken with Augusta: Mrs. Nugent joined her, and was equally animated in the expression of her surprise at the very extraordinary conduct of the old lady: Mr. Nugent was therefore obliged to entreat Lady Caroline to make allow-

ances for her age, and long habits of wilfulness, and Mr. St. Quentin merely laughed at her folly and presumption.

The evening was a long one: Sunday evenings usually are so. Moyle offered to read a sermon to keep himself awake.

"No, no, my dear fellow!" said Hyde; "that will be taxing our good nature too far. Here," added he, lighting a candle for him, "go to bed if you are sleepy, but don't inflict a sermon on us: we have had two from the reverend divine to-day: quite enough for one week!"

Moyle blew the candle out, sat down to the piano-forte, and played an Irish *melody* as he called it; Mr. St. Quentin nodded over the John Bull; Horace had just succeeded in reclaiming a stray hair of the violoncello bow, after it had slipped through his fingers for the twenty-third time; an occasional shot was still heard from the tongues of Lady Caroline or Mrs. Nugent, as the case might be, fulminated against the old Dutch seventy-four, the Wetherby; her

being out of range was not considered any drawback; George yawned over the "state of the odds at Tattersall's;" Hyde walked to the other end of the room towards Augusta, who sang, "Why are you wandering here, I pray?" Mrs. Markham and Miss Bayley exchanged, with nerveless tongues, a few languid, disjointed sentences; and Louisa, at a signal from her father, who was beating the devil's tattoo upon his snuff-box, rang the bell to order the servants in for prayers. This latter, on Sunday evenings, was one of the old-fashioned customs still in existence at the Hall; but the guests were at liberty to depart or remain, as they thought proper. Of course, they chose to stay.

The next day turned out rainy: riding was out of the question; however, the gentlemen hoped it would clear up—that is, the young ones; for Mr. Nugent and St. Quentin senior betook themselves to the library, where, though it was July, a fire was ordered, with whose cheering influence, and some pamphlets on the

corn and other bills, they wiled away some hours. The young men made divers hasty runs to the stables, from whence, after remaining there long enough to impregnate their garments with its peculiar odour, they returned to the drawing-room, occasionally bringing in a wet dog, who shook himself with great satisfaction, dispensing his fragrance overmuch, till at length it was voted by the ladies, *nem. con.* that dogs and men should be turned out of the room. In pursuance of this resolution, the gentlemen got "notice to quit;" when Moyle, pretending to admire a bead purse which Miss Bayley was manufacturing with infinite skill, though in truth he was throwing an *œillade* at the widow, perceived not that a ball of cotton rolling on the floor had encircled his boot; and the other end being entangled in Miss Bayley's work-box, a sad catastrophe ensued. Augusta gave the word "right about face; quick march!" and Moyle, with a degree of military precision only known in the Kilkenny yeomanry, whisked

round, and brought to the floor some thousands of glass beads, of the minutest size, and most delicate hues. Away they rolled, bounding over the infinite space of the magnificent Brussels carpet, which, by its elasticity, gave them a *ricochet* movement. These were to be retrieved, however, as were others that Miss Bayley caught by stretching out her legs, and pointing her knees south-east and south-west: not so others, whose hapless fate was to adorn the wet and dirty Bluster with their glittering spoils, sticking to his long hair, and showing like the powdered surface of some rare twelfth-night device in Jarrin's shop-window. Moyle seeing the mischief, made one bound, and gained the door: the cotton, still attached to boot and box, only broke as the latter banged against the dog's legs, who thinking he was to fetch and carry, bore the trophy out of the room in his mouth. The whole party were in convulsions, save and except Miss Bayley, whose gravity gave an additional zest to the affair:

even Lady Wetherby cackled like an old hen; and the parrot, which had been brought down for fear it should become melancholy if left alone, looked big, waddled, hectored, and screamed in concert, with a kind of delirious laugh.

To comfort Moyle in his distress, Horace invited him to his chamber, where having equipped himself in a suitable dress, (and having "all appliances and means to boot,") he lighted a cigar, and offered another to Narcissus, who, however, declared he must run down and make an apology to Miss Bayley first; and notwithstanding the "pshaws!" and "chut, nonsenses!" of Horace, he fulfilled his project, which he had better have let alone, as he only exposed himself to fresh ridicule, and made the matter worse by a bungling *amende*.—"Irish!" you will say: "in character, then," we answer.

On his return, Moyle vainly endeavoured to get a glimpse of the fuliginous dragoon, who had enshrouded himself so completely in a cloud

of smoke, and filled the room with so dense a vapour, that Moyle, in endeavouring to make him out, struck his nose against the bed-post.

"Halloo!" cried the captain, "can't you see, that you must knock my bed to pieces with your nose? it is plain enough, I'm sure, without making it moreso," he added in an under tone. "But come here, my boy! I'll give you a right Havannah, and a regular glass of Schiedam to water it with.—Never travel without these."

"Well, but do you smoke in your bed-room?"

"Every night; could not do without it; and this is such a villanous day, that a man 's obliged to smoke in self-defence. Here, help yourself."

The two worthies enjoyed themselves in this manner for an hour or two; and having both rather a turn for slang, they found one another improve vastly on acquaintance.

Horace, in fact, was a perfect dragoon. He could slang it with men, and talk froth and

flummery with women; and being quite at home in every thing but his profession, he was looked up to as a pattern of excellence,—"a glass wherein the ——th should dress themselves," and as such quite idolized by his regiment.

After their "whiff," they "doffed their toggery;" and assuming other habiliments, descended to the luncheon-room, which had been just deserted by the rest of the party.

If any piece of vanity is excusable, we think it is the vanity of possessing a fine old place in the country, which our fathers have for centuries had in possession before us. Add to this, a consciousness of birth in a long line of ancestry, whose pictures frown in dread array, or smile in rosy sweetness upon the beholder; and while you consider such to have been the case at Nugent Hall, pardon its owner for taking a pride, and not a secret one, in showing the picture-gallery to every visitor who made the request.

As the day still continued wet, although

not a particularly good time to look at pictures, the party proposed an examination of the gallery and armoury. In the former, in damp weather there was always a good fire, which not only did the pictures much service, but took off from the gloominess which would otherwise have attached to the place, from the sombre appearance of the old oak floor and wainscot; the ponderous, yet splendidly carved beams and cornices; and the Gothic-stained window at its western end.

We do not mean to fatigue the reader with an elaborate description of "the Nugent Gallery:" our powers are far too feeble to approach justice in such a task; and we shall therefore leave it to Mr. Nugent to point out the various beauties of the Claudes, pre-eminent in all their sunset glow, the pastoral harmony of the Nicolai Poussins; the striking effect of light and shade in the Rembrandts; the brilliancy of Guido; the master-touches of Rubens and Raphael; and the wild grandeur of Salvator Rosa; which, with

many pictures by Titian, the Carracci, Domenichino, Angelo, Teniers, and Vander this and that by dozens, formed altogether a collection such as few commoners possess. Pass we over these, to where the grim and proud Sir Gilbert seemed frowning, with his portentous bushy brows, upon the degenerate race which bore his name, as he pointed with gauntleted hand to the ruined castle upon yonder hill, seen from the end window of the gallery, as if he would say, "How are ye fallen, ye Nugents, since with strong arm *we* held those towers!" And there was reason in what he seemed to express; for not only are the present race of gentlemen, while much too weak to bear the weight of armour, more scrupulous than formerly as to cutting each other's throats, though we deny that they are one jot less brave; but the ladies, though quite as beautiful as the fair dames of the fourteenth century, are just as unequal to the task of carrying a milk-pail, or eating rusty bacon, and drinking a gallon of beer at breakfast,

as their lords would be of undertaking a crusade seven years long in the Holy Land, baked in iron moulds for the sake of some cruel beauty, the sun of whose favour is in the meantime shining upon a less enterprising knight, who has had the bad taste to remain at home. Sad, sad change! No more do we hear of a valiant Sir Guy, or Sir Geoffry, or Sir Hugo, burning a neighbouring castle, and carrying off the fair daughter of its chieftain, while he murders her father and seven brothers; and upon the very natural suspicion of her still preserving a spark of love for the man to whom she was betrothed, before his own gallant attack upon her father's fortress, sheathing his dagger in her heart.

Alas! alas! what days are we fallen upon! We can no longer get absolution for our sins every Monday morning, and begin a fresh score for the week; or find some good-natured priest to add to the weight of crime which made him seek the convenient protection of a religious

garment, by taking them upon himself. No, unfortunate protestants, ye cannot now get leave to marry your own nieces, nor to put away a wife when you are tired of her, and take another, the novelty of whose charms has struck you; nor can a king even, reformer or reformed, marry and murder, or repudiate half-a-dozen wives as formerly. But though we are now excluded from all these privileges and spirit-stirring adventures, we may, with Mr. Nugent, admire the nobleness of heart which urged his ancestor Sir Gilbert to decline any reward for covering his sovereign's retreat from that disastrous field in which England's glory was so tarnished; nor can we refuse our sympathy with the virtuous indignation which he felt, as the recollection rose to his mind of that sovereign's after neglect of, and ingratitude to, a faithful servant, while he lavished favours upon a worthless foreigner. But compassion for this weak and unfortunate prince must always swallow up other feelings; and sincere thankfulness fill our

hearts, that we live not now in a time when murder and civil war distracted the land; "all pity choked with custom of fell deeds."

There were other mail-clad warriors in the gallery, "bearded like the pard." Ladies were there also, behooded and bewimpled in the fashion of thât day, contrasting strangely with the greater display of nature's charms, which the costume of the Second Charles's court presented to the eye in the pictures opposite. Judges and statesmen of the lineal tree, and collateral branches, gloomy and thoughtful, mingled with military and naval favourites of fame and fortune, and courtiers, handsome, proud, and gaudy. The gorgeously attired lady of quality, in the Elizabethan court dress, shone stately and stiff, with her high frill and diamond stomacher; while the before-mentioned beauty of Charles's time detained the eye untired in the contemplation and admiration of Sir Peter Lely's unrivalled touch, causing the enraptured spectator to pronounce that colouring inimitable save by

"Nature's own sweet and cunning hand." The voluptuous eye, the *vermeil* lip, perhaps too smiling; the long stray ringlets curling like tendrils gracefully about the alabaster neck, the parent stem of all these beauties;—fixing the gaze of the delighted beholder, till he grows ashamed of paying so much homage to a mere picture.

Adjoining the gallery was the armoury, interesting to the antiquary from the splendid suits of more or less ancient armour it contained, with divers uncouth implements of war, all arranged in the most correct order. This was inspected by the party, of which the smokers now formed a part, though a consciousness of the effects of the cigar made them keep rather aloof from the rest. Sundry antique apartments were also explored, the old hangings of which in real Gobelin tapestry, with the cumbrous corresponding furniture, caused a kind of melancholy awe in the spectators, as they thought of the numerous tenants by whom these cham-

bers had at different times been occupied, and who had long since mouldered in the silent tomb.

As they retraced their steps, and again entered the picture-gallery, the afternoon's sun streamed through the western window, and dissipated with his red light the melancholy speculations which the old armour and tapestried rooms had created in the minds of the visitors.

A loud laugh from the younger party, which had not yet entered the gallery, and amongst whom Moyle's voice was greatly predominant, proclaimed that they at least felt no whit melancholy.

"Heavens!" exclaimed Lady Caroline, "what *can* be the matter?"

"No harm when Moyle and that laugh are to be heard, I'll answer for it," said Mr. Nugent. "Let us proceed," continued he; "the day seems clearing. Shall you be afraid to venture out on the terrace, or the gravel walks in the garden?"

Lady Caroline said it was too wet for her, but requested Mrs. Nugent would take Augusta with her, if she went.

"Where is that girl, St. Quentin?" continued Lady Caroline: "I declare she worries me to death. I really haven't nerves for her; she is so violent and volatile, it quite oversets me. Ah! Mr. Nugent, you smile; but I assure you I am more distressed about her than I can well say. Whom she inherits these spirits from I know not; Mr. St. Quentin, I believe, was never so boisterous; and for myself I can aver that a laugh like hers was never heard in my father's family. The poor duke was a great deal too fond of a quiet life."

"My dear Lady Caroline," said Mr. Nugent, for St. Quentin had gone on, and descended the stairs, "remember how very young Augusta is, scarcely sixteen; and at that age how slightly removed a girl is from childhood!"

"Her spirits are quite delightful," said Mrs. Nugent, fishing.

"Ah!" replied Lady Caroline, shaking her head, "I wish she was like your Louisa, who with such cheerfulness, yet knows how to regulate it," &c. &c. &c.

Let us now return to the young people, whose mirth had caused Lady Caroline such a start. After having with infinite pleasure explored all their old hide-and-seek haunts, the scenes of their childish sports, they at length came to a room in which was a collection of old court and other dresses of the days gone by, and Hyde was engaged in replacing a velvet coat of his great-grandfather's, in which he had been making a tom-fool of himself, while Augusta was in like manner restoring to its proper shelf an old calash of a bonnet, with which she had completely deranged the disposition of her dark and flowing hair, now hanging in ringlets about her beautiful neck and shoulders. While thus occupied, they did not perceive that the rest of the party had left the room, till Moyle, having softly closed the door, turned the key,

and put it into his pocket. It was this brilliant piece of wit which had elicited such a peal of laughter from the young Irishman, wise in his own conceit, joined by the rest outside, and for a second by those within.

"Now's your time, Hyde," cried Moyle; and Hyde taking advantage of this unasked opportunity, ran towards Augusta, who was making for the door, and caught her in his arms.

"Now you raven-locked little beauty," said he, "will you tell mamma if I do not give you up your property?"

"Yes, I will," cried Augusta, "and if you do not get the door opened immediately. Mr. Moyle! Mr. Moyle! open the door directly, I desire you!"

"Ah! ah! you 're fast, my pretty fellow-prisoner," said Hyde, laughing; "now give me my due for finding this pretty little rose, which fell off that pretty, pretty little foot in the summer-house the other evening; or if you won't,

I'll take it." And he folded his arms round her waist, and stole a kiss from her beautiful coral lips, which Augusta, not so much bent upon escape as to break the door down, did not seek to prevent. It was but a moment that their hyacinthine curls and honey breaths mingled, and their hearts beat against each other; but it was a moment which one of the party remembered through good and ill, through long, long years of wretchedness, with a fervency of thought, uninjured, undiminished by the desolators, time and grief.

Louisa soon compelled Moyle to open the door, as it was getting, she thought, past a joke; and she knew that not only Lady Caroline, but her mother also, would be much displeased, were they to know of such wild tricks. The young couple, when they made their appearance, both attacked Moyle for locking them in, who declared that he would be much obliged to any one who should do him a similar piece of service.

"A pretty fellow you are, Master Hyde!" said Horace in joke; "locked up in a room with my sister! Upon my word, I think this is rather serious. Come hither, Miss Augusta, and answer for yourself;" continued he, catching the volatile young lady, and drawing her towards him.

"Oh! you horrid Horace! you have been smoking. Fie! get away, pray, I can't bear you," exclaimed she; "go, go,—get away, a hundred miles off. Come, Louisa, let us leave these smoky gentlemen to their own *sweet* society." And away tripped the two beautiful girls, like fairies, along the gallery, joining the other ladies, and proceeding to the garden.

"Hyde," said Moyle, *sotto voce*, "did you get a kiss? You are a spooney if you didn't."

"Pshaw! not I," said Hyde.

"Why, man, I gave you the opportunity on purpose. Never mind me, my dear boy, I can see as far into a mile-stone as most fellows," added he, with a knowing look.

"You are a very shrewd fellow, Moyle!" said

our hero, rather annoyed, "and look infinitely wise when you make that face; but you may be mistaken, you know."

The two brothers had gone on before, and Moyle, being now alone with Hyde, rejoined—

"Well, my dear lad, I may, as you say, be mistaken, but at any rate I am no Marplot. Faith, you may trust me. Let Moyle alone for that; but Hyde, whisper—she likes you, I can see that. Now will she have any money?"

"Your optics are very clear I have no doubt," said Hyde: "as to her having money, I suspect she won't have much; though I can ask one of those brothers of hers, if you particularly wish it."

"Pshaw! now you're getting queer. Well, I'm sorry I said any thing about it, since that's the way you take the affair. Ogh! bother, man! be a good fellow, and I'll never say any thing about Miss St. Quentin again."

"Agreed!" said Hyde, "and trust me, Moyle, you have taken a most absurd idea into your

head. *Allons,* we shall have time to give the horses a gallop before dinner. Where are those lads ?"

The brothers were soon overtaken, and gladly mounted their steeds for a split round Rushy Mead.

Moyle the next morning got a letter from a Tipperary friend of his at Cheltenham, telling him of some "very good fellows" being there, as also a proud display of the fair daughters of Erin ; and not many days elapsed before he was on the wing for that place of demi-fashionable resort, having first, as fame whispered, made pretty sure of the widow's smiles. We must now bid adieu to Moyle for some time, of whom it was agreed at Nugent Hall, that a kinder-hearted, worthier, or more honourable fellow never existed.

The party in fact, about this time, broke up entirely, and Nugent Hall relapsed into its former state of tranquil antiquity and preciseness. The harp of Augusta was hushed, and the voice

of Louisa warbled unaccompanied by the all-musical Horace, of whose vicinity the only airy signs were those given by his distant flute or hautboy, deep in the woods of Dane's Court, whose melodious strains came wafted on the southern breeze by fits to Nugent Hall; while Hyde and Louisa, wandering through these grounds, often stopped to listen to the distant ravishing notes of their favourite Rossini.

The time was now approaching when Hyde was to be sent to the University. Much good advice was administered on this occasion by his father, which if we could collect, should be published under the head of "Advice to a Young Gentleman upon," &c. &c. but we regret to say all recollections of those excellent injunctions have passed away, and the rising generation must be the losers thereby. Suffice it to say, Hyde went to Oxford, and Augusta for a time was forgotten.

Happy they who depart on these occasions, compared to the lot of those who are left! The

young mind, just entering on the world, perhaps feels pangs at parting, and for a few days the heart rushes occasionally to the eyes; but new scenes, new friends, are met with, and this feeling becomes deadened in the breast. Not so is it with the affectionate relations, and idolizing friends who are left to suffer; each scene, each sound, bringing a painful remembrance of the happy past continually to the mind. The same dull dwelling, the vacant seat, the unoccupied rooms, the silent space once filled by the voice of the departed, the unopened book, the one glove missed at parting, now useless come to light, the whining and disconsolate dog, and worst of all, the marks indelible of the carriage wheels that bore the valued one from us, no friendly shower coming to wash even this proof of absence from our minds;—all, all conspire to tell us what we have lost, perhaps too little prized while present. But if friendship feel all this, say what must be the anguish of her, the silent one, who, with love deep in her breast, dares not

confess it, lest *he* may not share the passion; compelled to drag alone her chain of existence, and feel

> The long year link'd with heavy day on day;
> And all which must be borne, and never told!

CHAP. IV.

Oh, the bonny Christ-church bells.

OLD SONG.

BEHOLD Hyde Nugent now at that seat of wisdom and learning, "where the very paving-stones have an air of pedantry and awe," as we have read; though we can only suppose that the gifted traveller from whose brain such an idea emanated, must have spoken of Oxford as on a sunny day, when the broad shadows of the colleges, or reverend dignitaries, and others, who form not the *least* part of that eminent university, were cast in dark masses upon the unconscious street; which, however, our traveller

makes to bear the weight of their sins, as well as the reflection of their bodies.

With the studies of our hero we have little to do; they form a minor part of the occupation of a—man; though in point of fact Hyde was not particularly idle, and by no means vicious; but as he wanted application, it was unlikely, where not obliged, that he should prejudice his health by a too scrupulous devotion to reading or mathematics. His tutor was a Mr. Green, a thorough-paced Oxonian, in the scholastic sense of the term. He could tell you every man who had flourished at Oxford from Anthony a-Wood to John Hall, without missing one. His head was so full of Greek, that the very characters seemed pushing their angular and uncouth shapes nearly through the *pia* and *dura mater*, the *cerebrum* and *cerebellum;* a glorious field of speculation for the phrenologist! His face and person showed like a figure intended to head one of the propositions in Euclid; for the nose and chin essayed to form an angle of inci-

dence, while his bald forehead (a remarkably high one by the bye,) was the arc of a great circle; his acute-angled shoulders were intersected by the curve of his back; and his paralellopipedons of feet were struck on two radii diverging from the centre of the projection we have described. Enough! he has been demonstrated. We have little more to do with him, except to say that he was a very good man: he had, however, small influence over Hyde.

The greatest friend our hero had at Oxford was Frederick Burgoyne, whom we have before slightly mentioned, a son of Lord Cirencester, a noble, generous, high-spirited young man, perhaps rather quarrelsome; at least people said so, though that opinion might have arisen from the proud spirit he possessed. His habits were expensive; he had few friends; yet where he formed an attachment, it was lasting and sincere. With splendid abilities and a richly-stored mind, he yet detested a display of learning. He had been educated at Eton, on leaving which he was

some time at Göttingen, where he pursued his studies with unwearied diligence, and after that time he had passed two or three years in different parts of Germany and Holland. For six months he had procured himself an asylum as it were from the world, in one of Vienna's most celebrated monasteries, to ascertain the infallibility of the Romish doctrines, as asserted by its ministers; its bearings, and claims to the confidence of its disciples. The holy fathers hoped to make him a proselyte, but these

> Eremites and friars,
> White, black, and grey, with all their trumpery,

so far from bringing him over to the true church, as they choose to style it, and manufacturing him into a good Catholic, only succeeded in making a bad Protestant, or rather a bad Christian; for he protested against the supremacy of the pope with as great vehemence as he satirised the absurdities of the Romish religion. But unfortunately, he had not stopped here; for the mummery he was witness to made him some-

thing very nearly approaching a deist; the daily profaneness and hypocrisy of the brotherhood who professed themselves disciples of our divine Master, shaking his faith in the grand and primary basis of the religion he had been brought up in. At the age of twenty-one, he chose, contrary to his father's wish, to immure himself at Oxford, where, however, he in some measure relaxed from the severity of his studies.

In person Burgoyne was tall and handsome: a dark crisped head of hair, a broad and fine forehead, hazel eyes, and good teeth, set off a rather florid complexion to great advantage; yet notwithstanding these good features, there was something in the expression of his countenance which displeased, something fearful in his eye. He was not, as we have observed, a general favourite; one reason for which was, perhaps, that he was too clever and too well-read for most of the men he had the chance of associating with. The unlearned he despised for their ignorance; the learned he hated for

their pedantry: in fact, Hyde Nugent was the only fellow that he could, he said, make it out with. Still his society was courted. Nugent saw the faults in Burgoyne's character, and humoured them, bearing with his quick temper till his friend saw and acknowledged his error. On the other hand, Burgoyne perceived many weak points in the character of Nugent, which, if any one could correct, he thought that power lay in him. In this, perhaps, he overrated his abilities; however, the intention was good, and it is certain that Hyde derived no little benefit from his advice and mentorship. Burgoyne observed in our hero a disposition to yield too readily to persuasion; a very common error, or rather weakness, but a deadly misfortune to the person who allows himself to be so led: who is not gifted with sufficient strength to enable him to resist the importunities of others to join in pursuits which not only his heart condemns, but which, perhaps, at the time, and afterwards, render him completely miserable, instead of

giving the least satisfaction. We have mentioned that Burgoyne was a man of expensive habits, and, as such, to say he acted the part of a Mentor may appear rather paradoxical; but to do him justice we must state, that so far from leading others into expenses which they could ill afford, he never would permit any to join him in his prodigalities, whose purses were not as well lined as his own. Hyde, however, had as much money as he wanted: though, had he been as poor as the poorest there, Burgoyne's friendship would have been no less, nor his advice less valuable.

Burgoyne drew and drew, and ever his father reproved him, yet permitted the continuance of his extravagance. However, he had no debts of long standing; rather more than some of our first-rate fashionables can say! His tailor's and boot-maker's bills, which would have made a Skeffington stare in his best days, were regularly paid at the year's end. As for Hyde, though he had every thing he wanted, was well

mounted, and well dressed, he knew he could not keep pace with Burgoyne on the allowance, though a very fair one, which his father made him; nor was he mad enough to attempt it. The tastes of our two friends were much alike: for instance, both admired painting, though neither ever touched a pencil; both loved music, though neither played; both loved the chase, and both most heartily detested coercion; yet, although they thought a red coat indispensable in a hunting field, they were not such desperate admirers of *couleur de rose* as to imagine it better suited to the *dos* of a dignitary than the more ordinary and less gaudy colour; nor did they, while acknowledging it proper that "birds of a feather" should "flock together," think of attiring one of ill omen in canonical appurtenances; or, rather, they never thought about the matter.

Poor Mr. Green found it a hopeless task to get our hero to apply himself to any thing. Young Nugent relied on his very good abilities

to be able to conquer some difficulty on a future occasion, when he should be in the humour, which, however, did not occur; and by thus putting off the evil day, he at length found himself so *accablé d' affaires*, that he was always obliged to wipe off the old score with a sponge, and begin afresh, to make a similar ending.

Euclid formed of course part of his studies; but the sight of a whip or box-coat never failed to disturb his attempts at proving that A, B, C, was equal to D, E, F; and although he did not, with the geometrical linen-draper in the John Bull, imagine that the best way to arrive at Q, or Q. E. D., was to take C, A, B, yet he generally on these occasions threw down Euclid, and sallied forth to stir up Burgoyne for a drive.

Hyde was only in the second year of his collegiate, when an event happened which cut short his academic career. But we must not anticipate. A freshman of the name of Birstal, a Leicestershire man, with more cash than wit,

and a greater share of malevolence than either, had, upon first entering ——— ———, fancied some slight had been put upon him by our hero and Burgoyne. The former had certainly quizzed him, but instead of resenting the affront at once, or passing it over altogether, Birstal treasured up his wrongs, and waited till some favourable opportunity should afford him his full revenge. About a month after this, when Hyde had long forgotten even having given the man cause of uneasiness, they happened to meet at a supper given by a man of the name of Smith; but no matter what his name was, here were Hyde and Birstal seated opposite to each other. The wine circulated briskly; our hero made some assertion about Leicestershire, where he had never been, and Birstal flatly contradicted him. High words followed; the lie was given by the freshman; and instantly a decanter winged its way towards his head with the speed of lightning. This he fortunately evaded, and the devoted vessel was dashed into a thousand pieces against the wall.

The party of course immediately dispersed, and the irritated young men were effectually prevented from further quarrel, by their respective friends taking them to their rooms.

Hyde was outrageous at the insult he had received; pistols, swords, seconds, challenge, ran in rapid succession through his mind. "Scoundrel!" he exclaimed, "I wish I had broken his head. The lie too! d——n him! he shall answer for this at day-break." And after pacing up and down his room for half an hour, breathing nothing but "threatenings" and revenges, he opened his desk, penned a challenge, which he intended to send by Burgoyne in the morning, and wrapping himself in a large cloak, lay down on his bed, intending not to sleep, but watch for daylight.

The wine he had drunk, however, defeated this intention: his thoughts insensibly calmed; his eyes yielded to the influence of the fire, as he watched its flickering glare; and he dropped into a slumber from which he awoke in a cold

shiver, the effect of not having taken off his clothes. About an hour after sun-rise, considerably rationalized by his few hours' sleep, he started up, and tearing the note, determined upon taking Burgoyne's advice, before he proceeded to the last extremity. When he met Burgoyne, which from circumstances was not till the middle of the day, he related the adventure of the supper, and asking what was the best manner of proceeding, answered himself.

"I am determined," said he, "that I will have satisfaction. Never was I so grossly insulted in my life; so, my dear Frederick, you must do me the favour to carry a message to the scoundrel."

"An honourable office you design me," said Burgoyne, "that of carrying a message to a scoundrel! But to be serious, Hyde," continued he, lounging in his arm-chair, wrapped in his dressing-gown of many-coloured silk brocade, and reaching to the chimney-piece for his snuff-

box, "to be serious, need there absolutely be any fighting in the case? Suppose he were to make you a public apology, which he will not be so unreasonable as to refuse, would it not, with the risk of life which he has already undergone from your bottle, be sufficient satisfaction, think you?"

"No, no, no!" exclaimed Hyde; "other satisfaction I must and will have."

"But, my dear fellow, you will also have the satisfaction of being expelled, or rusticated at the least, even should the issue be bloodless."

"I care not; better to be expelled than branded with the name of ——"

"Pooh! pooh! don't put yourself in a fuss. These things are easily settled at Oxford without shooting one another."

"Come, come, Frederick, you would not advise the sacrifice of my character through life. If you do not choose to be my friend, I——"

"Hyde, Hyde, do not be absurd. Give me

a short time to think the business over, and if 'it must be so,' why then 'thou reasonest well.'"

After some short time, Burgoyne agreed to demand an apology for his friend; but the freshman was stubborn,—he would make no apology. A challenge was therefore sent, requesting Birstal to name time and place, and provide himself with a friend, which he promptly replied to "in good set terms."

Burgoyne was sorry for his friend. "But yet," thought he, "what can be done? The lie direct! a blow might as soon be forgiven." Hyde was not now a school-boy, and Birstal was older than he. Hyde certainly felt less concerned than Burgoyne. To say that he was indifferent upon going out for the first time, would be absurd. He had much to occupy his time, and more his mind. What, he thought, would be the feelings of his friends, should he fall? and what his own, should such be the fate of his adversary? The conflict in his soul was great; and similar, we apprehend, are every

man's sensations on the eve of a duel. We speak here of his first of fights, for the professed duellist must be excluded from all claim to feeling whatever. Of the sensation of fear, however, Hyde had as little as any man; besides, a proud feeling came to his assistance, that the honour of his family stood or fell as he should conduct himself.

Burgoyne, as second, had not this feeling to animate him. Had he been to act as principal, he would have performed his part with greater cheerfulness; but as it was, he had full leisure to see and regret the cruel necessity which obliged two young men to go out and seek each other's life, merely for a few hasty words spoken when under the influence of wine. Oh! who that has been placed in both situations, that of principal, and that of second, but must confess that the feeling of the latter is more exquisitely painful than the other? The self-reproachful, the indescribable, the damnable feeling that a second experiences when on the ground, unable to

divest himself of the idea, however well he may act, however cleverly for his friend, that, should either fall, he must be accessary to the murder; that he is in fact assisting two men to kill each other, both perhaps his friends, one certainly his intimate friend, to whom he is doing this "last best office," this act of true friendship, loading his pistol that he may, at least if he die, go out of the world while attempting to break one of God's most awful commands, "Thou shalt do no murder;" and letting fall a hat or a handkerchief that his friend may be killed fairly, and like a gentleman.

At the appointed time they met. A surgeon was in attendance. The ground was measured, and the pistols loaded. Birstal was seconded by a man of the name of Shallowner, a swearing and drinking ruffian, who, though an acquaintance of and belonging to the same college as Hyde and Burgoyne, was a friend of neither. Burgoyne advanced to know if any apology would be made, but the freshman was obstinate;

and the seconds having placed their men and taken their stations, the signal was given. Both fired together, and Birstal's pistol dropped from his hand. He was shot through the wrist, and the ball, taking a slanting direction, passed out through the fleshy part of the fore-arm, as the surgeon reported, without touching a bone or wounding an artery. "Lucky for Master Birstal!" observed Shallowner. "D—n it! a near go, old boy, eh? Another inch—sink me, eh? Come, doctor, don't be humbugging there for an hour about this little scratch; I'm in a hurry."

"'He jests at scars'—you know the rest," replied the doctor, as he coolly proceeded to bind up the wound.

Meantime, Hyde stood with his arms folded, and his discharged pistol in his hand. Shallowner now advanced to ask if he was satisfied. Burgoyne answered in the affirmative for his friend, and Hyde went immediately up to Birstal to ascertain the extent of his injury, and proffer a friendly hand. Birstal, however, pre-

served a gloomy silence, and pushed away the hand of his adversary with indignation. Our hero shrugged his shoulders, and attended by Burgoyne left the ground, while the wounded man was assisted to his room by Shallowner and the surgeon.

In such a place as Oxford, the duel could not be long before it got wind. The head was soon acquainted with the affair, and to make short of a long story, the wounded and second were sent to breathe a little country air, while the challenger and his friend were expelled.

The grief of Hyde was greater for his friend than himself, except as regarded home affairs; for he knew the regrets and displeasure the news would cause his father could not fail to be excessive. Burgoyne made very light of the business: he should at any rate, he said, have left Oxford in a short time, and as he went there rather against than in compliance with the wishes of his father, he was perfectly at liberty to take his departure when he pleased.

Besides, his line of conduct was precisely what he should have expected Hyde to have adopted, had he been placed in a similar situation.

The lamentations of poor Green on the occasion were quite amusing. Hyde could scarcely refrain from laughing, and Burgoyne, who happened to be present at their first interview, did not attempt to disguise his mirth.

Young Nugent, in this his first trouble, was undecided whether to make peace with his father by letter or by deputy ; for he was determined nothing should induce him to see him before the indignation had subsided, which he very naturally thought would be caused when the intelligence reached Cavendish-square, where the Nugents had taken a house for the ensuing season. Burgoyne recommended him to have two strings to his bow; to write an explanation of facts, of which the report would probably too soon reach the ear of Mr. Nugent, with all their usual embellishments, and to get some friend to mediate for him personally, when the first burst of

the storm should be blown over. Hyde decided upon adopting this advice, and while his friend was preparing to depart for the seat of an uncle in Gloucestershire, he himself assumed the pen, and despatched a letter to his father.

CHAP. V.

——— Therefore I pray you,
As you have ever been my father's friend,
————cast your good counsels
Upon his passion.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE summer which intervened between our hero's departure from his father's halls, and the present dilemma in which he found himself, had been passed by the Nugents pleasantly enough at Weymouth. The presentation of Louisa had been postponed for another year, and as the health of Mrs. Nugent required sea-bathing, the above-named watering-place was fixed on as their place of sojourn for a few months. The Malmesbridges had passed a fortnight with them at the hall before they set out, and the noble

visitors had departed for the sea-side, in a south-easterly direction, highly delighted, as they expressed themselves, with every thing about the antiquated seat of the "proud Nugents," as the neighbouring gentry were pleased to style our friends.

In our younger days, Weymouth was far other than the fallen one she now is. Royalty then was graciously pleased to gladden her with a smile, and the happy oppidans and birds of passage rejoiced in the annual presence of their sovereign. In fact, Weymouth was what Brighton is, or has been recently. Now, alas! the fair dames are forced as a *pis aller* to put up with the sweet self-complacent smiles of a few rantipole dragoons, for the appearance of whose mustachios on the esplanade there is as anxious a look-out, as there formerly was for the condescending bow and benign manner of the much-loved monarch.

The ——th was quartered in the vicinity, and Horace was consequently much with the

Nugents. Hyde and Burgoyne had made the tour of the Highlands and lakes together during this summer, after which they took a run over to the continent for the remainder of the vacation. Our hero consequently had seen nothing of Nugent Hall, its inhabitants, or their neighbours, since he first went to Oxford.

Not confining their continental *trajet* to the usual limits, our two friends visited Brest, Toulon, and Marseilles. Although very opposite quarters of France, we have mentioned their visit to the two former as having led to an acquaintance with the captain of an English frigate, which had put into both ports, whom Hyde and Burgoyne found a most agreeable companion, and who afterwards proved a serviceable friend. This was Captain Bridgewater, a son of Lord Abberford, a very gentlemanlike and fine young man. He commanded the Dædalus, and as an Englishman and a sailor, the young travellers were not long in forming an acquaintance with him. Burgoyne had seen enough of continen-

tal manners to make him prefer the society of his countrymen, whenever it could be met with, —bad taste we know, but such was the case.

But let us return to Hyde at Oxford. We left him despatching his letter to Cavendish Square, where, it has been before stated, Mr. Nugent had taken a house, whether a *reasonable* one or not we never heard. He trusted much to the softening effects of this letter. Burgoyne was not, however, quite so sanguine, and still recommended that some friend should be requested to use his good offices in our hero's behalf. Our readers will perhaps have already anticipated Lord Malmesbridge to be this friend. The marquis, Hyde knew from the papers, was in town, and he was certain, if time had not worked a wonderful change in him, he was a man who would gladly exert himself to draw his former young favourite out of the troubles which beset him. A restoration to —— College was, he knew, out of the question; all he wanted was forgiveness for the

past; not but he inwardly confessed, if the thing was to do over again, he would pursue the very same course. "Off with you!" said Frederic; "the marquis is your man: take him with you to Cavendish-square."

"But suppose he won't go, as the Irishman said?"

"Then let him stay; but he will go, I am certain," returned Burgoyne.

The time came for the friends to part, and Burgoyne, as he shook our hero's hand, exclaimed, "I trust you will have a less rueful countenance when we next meet, or we must get some of those teeth drawn to make your visage a little shorter, and then what would Miss St. Quentin say?"

Hyde laughed, and departed: he had frequently mentioned her name,—so frequently in fact, during their lake and highland tour, on which occasions the feelings are sure to conjure up some female form, that Burgoyne unreasonably supposed there was a spice of *la*

belle passion in the case. Not so, however. Augusta had been quickly forgotten by our hero after leaving home, when once launched upon his comparatively dissipated Oxford life, which we have seen was also an idle one; and though remembered during his absence from the University, while beautiful scenery wrought the mind to that pitch which required some *beau idéal* of the human figure to fill up the landscape, she had again sunk into oblivion when the scene changed, and continental gaiety or college revels re-occupied his time and his senses.

Hyde left Oxford *sans regrets;* the last words of Burgoyne had conjured up a train of pleasing recollections in his mind, which lasted the greater part of the way to town. It was now the month of March, and the road was neither new nor interesting, though the day was fine; and as our hero approached the mighty Babylon, anticipations of a meeting with his father drove all other thoughts far away; fears for the displeasure of an offended parent over-

coming the short-lived pleasure with which he had in imagination dwelt upon the scenes of his boyhood; gone, never to return, and with them all unmixed happiness.

It is a comfortable thing to find oneself at Long's or Stevens's after a journey of whatever length, secure of finding all that London can afford in the way of good living, and the luxury of an excellent bed whereon to rest one's aching bones. At the former of these hotels, in due time young Nugent arrived; dined, mused, and read the papers. His body was not sufficiently tired to induce him to seek his chamber of repose; the mind required refreshment; and sleep, he feared, would not visit his eyelids, even with all the "appliances and means" to be found at Long's. To bed he would not go, to become the sport of wild and solitary reflections, or, should Sleep shed his poppies o'er him, of wilder dreams and slumbers, more frightful than all his waking reminiscences or anticipations.

It was Tuesday: he would patronize the Opera.

But should he meet his father there! A premature interview would upset all the plans he had formed for a propitiation. Never mind, thought he, I will risk it. He accordingly dressed, and set out for that temple of Apollo and the Graces.

It was late, and the street was clear of carriages. Hyde thought himself the last; but as his more humble vehicle drew off, a coronetted and splendid equipage, meteor-like, flashed up to the door. In a second the footmen were down, the steps unfolded, and the prettiest foot and ancle in the world showed itself from under a magnificent white satin dress, as the beautiful wearer stepped out of the carriage with the gracefully elastic movement of light youth and perfect proportion. While the young lady stopped a moment for her mother and sister, as Hyde supposed a more matronly dame and another young person to be, who followed, he waited to let them pass, partly through complaisance, and partly through a wish to obtain

a longer view of *cette jeune et jolie demoiselle.* Nugent then followed into the house. Alas for the character of English gallantry, it is so humdrum! A Frenchman now would have apostrophised the cold and insensate pavement, upbraiding it with a want of tenderness in being so unfeelingly dead to the sense of high honour which had been accorded it by the tread *d'un si joli pied.* But our friend, although he had French blood in his veins, preferred the contemplation of her fair face within to a useless expenditure of breath without. What a field was here for imagination, reflection, and speculation! The whole host of beauties whose feet had lightly pressed those broad flag-stones since the Opera House was built, might have been called up; and not only these, but hundreds of future divinities yet unknown, to the splendour of whose charms many and many a devoted heart is doomed to fall a sacrifice, whose grandmothers perhaps are yet unthought of! In this endless rumination the mind might have lost

itself, while the rapt enthusiast lost the opera.

Mrs. Nugent had a box for the season, but our hero found with great satisfaction that his mother and sister were that night absent, and it was improbable that his father should be there alone. A dinner party had in fact been given in Cavendish-square, which prevented them from coming. Louisa, *soit dit en passant*, was to be presented that year, should there be any drawing-room. She had already created *une grande sensation*; and had she been a titled personage, she would have been *acknowledged* to be, as she in reality *was*, one of the finest women, perhaps *the* finest, and a reigning belle, in town.

Hyde soon beheld the face of her whose beautiful form had first caught his eye; a face once seen, never to be forgotten, and now, as ever, conspicuous amidst the blaze of beauty, which it is said the tiers of opera boxes display, though you never see half-a-dozen pretty women there. The reason? Why, that the youthful

mothers, hating precocious beauty in their daughters, secure the most prominent places; and the still more youthful aspirants for fame and admiration are doomed to "blush unseen" in the profound obscurity of the crimson pigeon-hole. Or, the more elderly dowagers, their rouged faces embellished with a frontispiece by Truefitt, that celebrated artist, o'ershadow the charms of their daughters or nieces with vast rotundity of hat, and the spoils of divers ostriches, which nod gracefully (not the ostriches, but their feathers,) over the better half of the box front; the glittering and noble wearers taking this edifying way of preparing their minds on a Saturday night for the devotional exercises of Sunday morning. We are not very strait-laced, but we think the opera at no time a proper place for young people, certainly most unfit on the eve of the Sabbath. The elders, amongst whom we must, in the capacity of Mentor, class ourselves, cannot receive much benefit from it; while youthful and

warm imaginations must and do find it impossible to discard the glittering pageant, and the forms of opera dancers from their recollection, even while in the house of prayer. We cannot refuse our admiration to the science and skill evinced by B * * *, and one or two others, but really they might observe some decorum; and though behind the scenes they may display as much as they please, they ought to recollect that there *are* modest and virtuous women in the house, whose feelings of propriety must be outraged by beholding creatures of their own sex so utterly degrade themselves. Or, if their own sense of modesty is too feeble, the directors should enforce their attendance to particular rules. You think it would be difficult, sage reader? Indeed we fear so. The louder the plaudits echo through the house, the more decorum is laid aside; and the *corps de ballet*, that "numerous and well-fitted quire," as Cowley terms the years to come, pursue as opposite a course as possible to the

imaginary body of the quaint poet, who "hand in hand do *decently* advance." But enough; we might preach for hours, and all to no purpose. Nevertheless we must tenaciously adhere to our original position, and repeat that the opera is not the place for young men or young women on a Saturday night, and the old ones ought to be thinking of something else.

But it was not Saturday; neither, *soit dit en passant*, are we obliged to S ***, B ***, or W ***, whichever it may be, or Dr. Evelyn for the idea, all very clever men in their way; which we the more willingly confess, as our tastes and opinions happen to coincide.

We have sadly digressed; and, in our wanderings, have taken a jump from the Opera House, or, as it may be termed, the house of peeresses, to that of the Commons, or at least to a member thereof. We have introduced Dr. Evelyn; and if the gifted author of Tremaine and De Vere feel offended at his appearance in this our work, we hereby beg his pardon: we have commenced

our opera with the ballet; and had we not timely recollected ourselves, we might have ended with the overture. But be it not ours to invade the province of the Dublin people, who, we hear, have a *projet* of getting up an Italian opera in their good city, and will doubtless adopt this plan. Be it not ours to invade their province in any shape. But to resume: our hero's attention was now arrested by an old acquaintance, Captain Bridgewater. The meeting between them was cordial, and for the time put to flight other thoughts. Bridgewater had just entered the house with a very distinguished looking young man, whom he introduced to our hero as Captain Herbert. "But how is this, Nugent?" said Bridgewater: "why do I see you here, and why did I not meet you at your father's in Cavendish-square, where Herbert and myself have been dining?"

Hyde replied that he had just come up from Oxford, and that as it was an unseasonable hour to put the good people to the rout at home,

he had looked in at the opera, Long's being rather a dull place to pass the evening.

Bridgewater had only become known to the Nugents since their *séjour* in town: his friend, Wyndham Herbert, of the Guards, was also a recent acquaintance; and, with some others who dined there, they had set out for the opera to finish the evening upon the breaking up of the party. The guardsman, with a patronizing air, spoke a few words to young Nugent, who did not, however, seem sufficiently to appreciate the honour; but he was not unamused at the fluency with which his new acquaintance, in conversing with Bridgewater, discussed the merits and demerits of the dowagers and spinsters in the wane, decorated with feathers and diamonds, and the less ornamented, though splendidly dressed, youthful maidens, whose fresh, fair cheeks, where they could be seen, showed "purer than unsunned snow," and some nearly as white; contrasting oddly with the more glowing, or more bronzed countenances,

like the zinc and copper of a galvanic battery. But Captain Herbert's remarks, which were uttered in a low voice to Bridgewater, though sufficiently loud for Hyde to hear, had a tinge of malice in them, a satirical, ill-natured sneer, which argued as badly for the heart of the speaker, as they did, if true, for the reputation and dispositions of the unconscious objects of it.

Our hero was crammed into Fop's Alley in such a manner, that there was no possibility of egress or regress; he was therefore obliged to wait patiently for an opportunity of making the wished-for discovery of the name of the young lady he had seen; but a shorter way soon suggested itself than the first he had hit on, which was that of asking his friend Bridgewater, who knew every body and every thing. But his heart failed him when he came to the point; and instead of specifying who it was that he wanted to know the name of, he replied, to Bridgewater's question of "Which?"—"The young person with the dark hair in the fourth

box," instead of the one with the lightish hair in the fifth from the stage, or the eighth instead of the ninth, as it might be; for we forget the precise situation. Whose name it was, therefore, that Bridgewater told him he did not attend to: it was not the person he meant. However, he had still another string to his bow; for the young guardsman was proceeding to cut up the very lady with the dark hair, and he trusted that he might go on to the next box, though in a more favourable manner; "for," thought he, "'twere best to speak no harm of Brutus here." He feared, that should he hear an ill word of the fair incognita, he should be tempted to contradict the speaker; for sure he felt "no sin could harbour under such a form." But the entrance of a certain lord into a near box, where he showed his unpleasant-looking chin, turned the conversation in another direction.

"Look," said Herbert, "there's Paulstone in Lady G***'s box. I wonder they let him in with that beard. They say he fright-

ened Lady St. Cloud so dreadfully last month, she being *enceinte* at the time, that the child was born with a pair of mustaches and a *touffe*, which so infinitely delighted papa, that he went to the Horse Guards, and got the promise of a commission in the Tenth for him when he should come to years of discretion, wisely remarking that he was born to be a great captain. At least, this is what the world says; however, I 'm of a different opinion; for there was a young hussar cousin of her husband's very attentive to her at Brighton last year, and he perhaps thinking his relative wished for a little sun and air, might have been too kind to the absent *sposo*, and poor Paulstone's ugly face bears the blame of all. He 's not a bad fellow upon the whole, Paulstone; but he pesters one so damnably about his horses, so do all the * * * 's, that, by gad, one would think they had been born in a stable. Fine creature that Lady G * * *!" continued he, taking a pinch of snuff. " Cursed affected though—spoiled G * * *. Capital fellow before

he got married! I always cut a man as soon as he takes unto himself a wife."

"There you are right," said Bridgewater in a quizzing way, "for you give so much of your time to the married women, that you have none to bestow upon their husbands."

And this was true; for Herbert was constantly dangling in the train of some wedded fair, wherever a certain young lady, who shall as yet be nameless, did not happen to be.

He smiled conceitedly at Bridgewater's sally.

"Nay, my dear sir," said he, "you are too severe: you really do me injustice."

The *divertissement* now attracted all eyes, and in fixing the attention of every one in the house, completely effected what the beautiful music of the Tancredi had failed to do. The guardsman's tongue was mute, or moved in praise of a set of opera dancers in a proportionate strain to that in which it had a few minutes before indulged in the *médisance* of the noble and the virtuous. Herbert now visited some of the

boxes, the titled tenants of which he had just been abusing, leaving Bridgewater and Hyde to make mutual inquiries as to each other's adventures and pursuits. At length the guardsman, conversing with a certain duchess, attracted Bridgewater's observation.

"I always know," said he, "who is upon the eve of giving parties long before the Morning Post, by observing where Herbert pays the greatest attention for the evening; that is, if it happens to be any one above the rank of a viscountess; for he prides himself upon not condescending to patronize the *canaille*."

"But is it not *stooping* a little," said Hyde, "to court the sunshine of people whom he is so very severe upon out of their hearing?"

"Oh," said Bridgewater, "that's an every-day occurrence in town, and thought nothing of. My dear Nugent, how very new you are! You need not have told me that you had just come up from Oxford; but you'll be more knowing before you leave town again, I dare say. People

abuse you behind your back here, and come the next moment to ask you to dinner. Herbert's case is somewhat different to be sure, for he abuses and gets invitations immediately after."

"But I fancy," observed Hyde, "he would get very few if the *provokers* knew how severely they were handled by him."

"That by some means they never do," was the reply; "or if such a thing happens, he has a speedy return to favour by abusing their next neighbours, or laughing with them at their most intimate friends."

Hyde shook his head.

"Besides," continued Bridgewater, "when Herbert does form a friendship, it is a sincere one: at least I believe that to be the case between him and me."

Hyde could scarcely forbear smiling, *new* as the captain had just said he was. "I should always be inclined to doubt a man," observed he, "who could be so insincere with others."

Herbert did not join the others till the *ballet,* for which they staid, was half over.

" That confounded simpleton Modbury," said he, " has kept me so long talking about some of his horses that are to run at Epsom—d—d long way off yet—that I have lost all the dancing. However, I told him they could not fail to win ; he has matched them against W * * * 's stud—sure to be beat, never mind : he 's to let me drive his barouche down, and mount me there if my horses are floored, as I shall take d—d good care they shall be, and save 'em up for Ascot ; so I mustn't abuse him."

" No, that would be unfair," said Hyde.

As they retreated into the crash-room, Hyde again observed the lovely girl who had awakened such an interest in him. " Now," thought he, " I will not lose the opportunity !" and he accordingly asked Bridgewater.

" Do you mean the one with brown hair, and tall, in a white dress ?"

" Yes, rather a light brown, and rather tall; rather ——"

" Oh, my dear fellow, if there are so many rathers in the case, it is impossible for me to tell you who she is."

Hyde laughed. " There, there," said he, in an under tone; " now she is going off with her mother and sister, I suppose; don't you see which I mean? with a dark silk cloak on."

" Oh! those are the Duchess of Rougemont, and the Lady G * * * s."

Now it happened that there was a party returning at the same moment, and nearly answering the same imperfect description as that given by our hero, who was, however, afraid of appearing too particular.

" They are very pretty!" said he.

" Hum—*comme ça*; they are I believe reckoned so, however," said Herbert, who had heard the conversation.

Hyde had observed the young guardsman in conversation with the party at one time during

the evening, and he thought there could be no mistake, although he was rather surprised at hearing them styled *comme ça*. Nevertheless there *was* a mistake on the part of Bridgewater, which, if Herbert had perceived, he did not choose to correct.

"Ah!" thought Hyde, "if she be the daughter of a duchess, she is not for me. I must discard her from my remembrance."

And for his own sake we must wish that he had rested in that determination, and that some sudden event had called him out of town the next morning; for we would allow him a few hours rest after his journey from Oxford; but fate urges us on we know not whither; and fortunate for us that it is so; for could we draw the curtain from futurity, and unveil the hidden secrets of time, what awful gulfs of misery and wretchedness would be presented to our view! And what painful anticipations, or restless impatience are we not saved by this natural fitness of things, this kind disposition of provi-

dence, in preventing us from beholding either future pain or future pleasure !

Hyde asked the two captains to accompany him to supper at Long's, which they, however, declined; and not particularly sorry to be alone, he retired from the scene.

The fatigues of travelling, and anxiety of mind which he had undergone, prevented his thoughts from dwelling very long upon any particular subject, agreeable or the reverse, before he fell asleep.

The next morning found him much refreshed, though not without some degree of agitation at the prospect of what he was to go through that day. Having dressed, descended into the coffee-room, and, while his breakfast was preparing, run over the columns of the Morning Herald, he proceeded to discuss his prawns and coffee, (excuse us, reader, we love to be particular when there are prawns for breakfast) which finished, he got up, took a turn towards the window, and another towards the fire-place, looked at himself

in the glass, perceived he had failed in his tie, ascended to the higher regions, and finding that all his white neckcloths had been floored by the journey, assumed a black one.

Behold him now upon the wing for Malmesbridge House, or rather upon the foot, whose handsome boot, shining in all the refulgence of Day and Martin, outvied the shame-faced sun, and bade him hide his diminished head; which piece of advice he very speedily took,—one of those dense fogs, for which London is so famous in the month of March, coming suddenly on, and enveloping every object in its deep gloom.

"All the better for me!" thought Hyde; "I shall be sure of finding the marquis at home."

His heart palpitated as he knocked at the door, and he even wished he might receive a negative to his inquiry: he was, however, admitted.

The marquis was at home, but engaged; Hyde, therefore, sent in his card, and was shown up-stairs, into a splendidly-furnished drawing-

room, there to wait in anxious expectation for his lordship's appearance,—an awful moment for him who has to ask a favour.

And here, in this fairy palace, a London drawing-room, was he kept full ten minutes before any one appeared to bear him company, having thus ample time to arrange his hyacinthine locks before a large mirror, to examine and admire his ten several nails, and to question whether Hoby made as neat boots as Bann. The furniture, useful and otherwise, of the magnificent room, next caught his attention. The ottoman, *bergères*, and work-tables, seldom we fear used, gave evidence of its being patronized by the fair, strong enough, even unsupported as it was by the corroborating proofs of a lady's writing-desk, displaying, as it lay open upon the rose-wood table, its purple velvet lining and silver bindings, and bearing a letter directed in a pretty female hand, and for a wonder, an open work-box, containing, to all appearance, divers knittings and embroiderings, all very useful in

their way, no doubt. A small golden candlestick with its delicate taper, which appeared to have been lately extinguished, stood by the side of the desk. A harp and grand piano-forte, with quantities of music and books, assisted in the adornment of the room, which the sumptuous character of the different *meubles*, and the light tastefulness of the hangings finished, giving it that air of splendour and elegance only to be found in the house of an English patrician.

Hyde finding there was no chance of his solitude being disturbed, took up a volume of Tasso, but had not achieved two lines before an inclination to yawn hinted that he was not at that moment greatly interested in the liberation of Jerusalem; he therefore replaced the book, and the folding-doors being open, walked to a window in the front room. But it was early, and nothing was then to be seen but a few demi-dandies in unpaid-for cabriolets or dennetts, with their grooms, and their coats of many capes, or Spanish cloaks. Besides the

morning was so foggy and disagreeable, that he turned in disgust from the scene, again to enjoy the more enlivening beams of a good fire.

By the bye, we have never given our readers an idea of what sort of person Hyde Nugent had become since his youthful days; three words, then, upon this subject. In figure he was rather tall than otherwise, an Apollo or an Antinous, or a mixture of both, though he did not stoop quite so much as the latter gentleman. His style of countenance was strictly Grecian; a profusion of nut-brown hair, arranged by a *friseur* whom our friend Antinous had recommended, adorned his wise *caput;* and his eyes, as Lady Luxury afterwards observed, were "dyed in heaven's own blue." *We* think they were darker, however. He was now about twenty, yet had at the same time a youthful and manly appearance; that is, he had all the healthy glow of youth without its effeminacy. But enough; we hate describing men, and have

only gone thus far for the sake of our fair readers, who might otherwise suppose he was like his friend Burgoyne, while in fact there never were two men who bore less of resemblance to each other.

But lest the reader should follow Hyde's example, and return this book to its place, as our hero had previously done with Tasso, we must proceed,—at least we will endeavour to do so, in as straight a line as we can on a foggy day in town.

Young Nugent was standing very composedly with his back to the fire, when an incipient yawn was interrupted most agreeably, most surprisingly, by the door opening, and admitting upon the light and happy foot of youth —— whom thinkest thou, reader?—the lady of the evening before? Right—'twas the very same.

She hesitated upon finding a gentleman in possession of the apartment she had left but a quarter of an hour before; but seeing nothing very alarming in the appearance of our hero,

she advanced to the table, and taking up the letter, seemed in doubt whether again to retreat and leave the gentleman to his meditations, or address him. In her father's house, the latter she thought the proper thing; but she was anticipated by young Nugent, who bowed and "trusted he was not a trespasser upon forbidden ground, fearing the servant might have made some mistake in showing him into that room, as he had come to wait upon Lord Malmesbridge." Hyde's speech might have been rather disjointed, astonished as he was at seeing one of the Lady G***s, as he had been led to suppose her, at the Marquis of Malmesbridge's. Could it be possible, he thought, that this should be a Lady Capel, whom his sister in a letter had stated was exceedingly pretty,—a good deal for a woman to allow—and that Bridgewater had made a mistake? Be it as it might, she was the very person whom he had in vain for some time worried himself about, and he was now resolved to find out the truth.

The lady requested he would not give himself any uneasiness: Lord Malmesbridge would be most happy to see him, she was certain; but she knew he was engaged with some election people. She would tell ——

"By no means," interrupted Hyde, always too soon or too late with every thing he did or said: "by no means; I beg I may not break in upon the marquis's occupations. I have sent my card to him, and I dare say he will see me when he is at leisure."

"Oh, I fancy my father will be very happy to take advantage of any excuse to get away from his present company."

"Her father!" thought our hero: "then she *is* a Lady Capel!"

"Have I the honour of speaking to a daughter of Lord Malmesbridge?" said he, impudently enough.

The lady bowed.

At the moment, father, friends, Oxford, all were forgotten in the more tumultuous feeling

excited in Hyde's bosom by this discovery, and he was only recalled to himself by the graceful folds of her purple silk drapery, as he caught a last glimpse of it floating on the current of air caused by the closing door as she departed.

The beautiful creature had, he thought, appeared to him as his good genius, to soothe his mind in a moment of anxiety like the present;—a bright vision, to cheer his way, and light his path; an angel who, by some wonderful means, evading him while sought, now unsought appeared, when hope had been given up.

Oh ye halcyon moments! upon the recollection of which the warm and passionate thoughts of youth can dwell with such secret rapture mingled with regret, why will ye haunt the memory of the wretched?

Lady Georgina Capel, for she it was, had descended to give orders that the marquis might be reminded of a gentleman's being in attendance upon him, when the card of our hero, which the stupid servant had, instead of deli-

vering, placed on a marble table in the vestibule leading to the room of Lord Malmesbridge, struck her ladyship's eye. If there was anything too condescending in the daughter of a marquis performing such an act of good-nature, or if there was a certain degree of curiosity to know whom the young gentleman might be, it deserved as much praise as censure; but we will give it neither.

With some surprise, Lady Georgina perceived "Mr. Hyde Nugent" upon the card, whose name she could not fail to have heard in his father's house during her *séjour* at the Hall of the summer before. What she thought of him, we will not pretend to define.

Hyde had not much time to dwell upon the beauteous form and silver-toned voice of Lady Georgina, before the marquis entered, and shaking the hand of our hero, exclaimed, "Nugent, my dear boy, what good star has guided you hither? Why, how you are grown! Are you really the same Hyde that I last saw—how

many years ago?—at Westminster, covered to the knees with mud?"

"The same, my lord," said Hyde, his eyes glistening with joy at this kind reception: "the same, my lord, not forgetting the tip," continued he, laughing, "nor the scrape you got me out of in the case of a certain porcelain jar some years before at home; the grateful recollection of which has induced me to beg another still greater favour."

"Name it," said Lord Malmesbridge; "and if it is not *very* unreasonable, I think I may promise you my assistance."

Hyde related the unfortunate Oxford affair, not concealing a single circumstance, and requested the marquis to become his advocate with Mr. Nugent.

Lord Malmesbridge looked rather solemn and vexed at the mention of the duel; but his good-nature soon returning, he congratulated Hyde upon getting so well out of the scrape, and gave him reason to hope his father would not prove

inflexible; though, as he said, the son must expect the parent to be greatly displeased at his expulsion from Oxford; the effect of a cause, which, though it might be termed *only a little affair of honour*, was at his age, and in college, an uncalled-for and an unusual thing. "But," said the marquis, smiling and putting his hand on the shoulder of his young friend, "I am to be your mediator, and not your judge: let us go to Cavendish-square. Did you ride here?"

"No, I walked."

"Well, then, I will order horses for us both. But first I must introduce you to Lady Malmesbridge. She is, I suspect, in the luncheon-room, since I do not find her here, this being her sanctum. You will, I dare say, have no objection to join the party."

"I shall be most proud of the introduction; but as for the luncheon, I have only just breakfasted."

"You lazy fellow!"

They entered the room where *vivres* were prepared; and our hero, on being presented to the marchioness and her two daughters, the ladies Elizabeth and Georgina Capel, recognized in them the party whose descent from their carriage at the door of the Opera-house, he had the evening before, not without some degree of interest, been a silent witness of.

Lady Malmesbridge was now in the wane of her charms, which, indeed, she had retained longer than most women who lead a fashionable life; and who, after ceasing themselves to derive gratification from gaiety and late hours, are obliged to go through a second course, in their less youthful days, to promote the pleasure or welfare of their daughters. Her ladyship was still a fine woman. Plainly yet tastefully dressed, she had quite the *air noble;* and though not tall, her appearance could not fail to strike as commanding and dignified.

"This is not your first interview," said the

marquis as he introduced our hero to Lady Georgina, who slightly coloured while Lady Malmesbridge seemed to look for an explanation.

"Mamma," said the young lady, "you recollect, when we were called to look at the things from Harding's, you sent me back for the letter to Brandsford into the drawing-room, where I found they had shown Mr. Nugent, and where he might have remained till now, had I not sent in to my father, for, &c. &c. &c."

Hyde feared he had unintentionally ———

"I hope you were good," interrupted Lady Malmesbridge, "and did not pull my work to pieces."

"Oh! I was particularly good," replied Hyde, with a smile: "I have been so well schooled at home upon these affairs, that I should think myself guilty of high treason were my hands to profane a lady's work."

"I rather doubt your goodness at home,"

said Lady Malmesbridge, shaking her head, "though Mrs. Nugent did give you a tolerably good character, I recollect."

"Oh, but, mamma," said Lady Elizabeth, "you know how you praise Brandsford, and I declare he is the most mischievous person I know."

"Thank you, thank you," said Hyde, ironically, and bowing to her ladyship; "you mean to imply, then, that the character my mother gave of me was not to be depended on."

Lady Elizabeth laughed at the *contre-temps* she had made, and the marquis, finding Hyde was likely to be well taken care of, left the room to equip himself for the ride; glad of the opportunity to breathe a little fresh though foggy air, after the long *sederunt* he had endured with some of his young relations, Lord George Montague's hoped-for constituents, in whose favour he was assisting in the canvass of ***.

If Nugent was *épris* with the appearance of

Lady Georgina on the evening before, his admiration was not diminished by the present opportunity afforded him of surveying her face and figure; and if any thing was before wanting to complete the conquest, the touching melody of her voice when she spoke, the vivacious, yet sweet and unaffected harmony of every tone and word she uttered, served to rivet the chains which he had before passively allowed to wind themselves round him. He wisely forbore to mention having seen the trio at the opera the night before; and although Lady Georgina had perceived that some gentleman was officiously ceremonious in keeping back, and getting rather in than out of the way when she got out of the carriage, she was not conscious of having noticed his face, nor had she the slightest idea that he was the very identical person who was now helping her to the wing of a chicken.

Lord Malmesbridge soon re-appeared, and the horses having been reported ready, the gentlemen set out for Cavendish-square, Hyde first

receiving an invitation to dinner for the next day, which it is scarcely requisite to say he did not refuse. During the ride, our hero was not particularly loquacious. His mind floated in that unhappy middle state proper to some substance placed between two strongly-charged electric bodies, having an affinity to each, yet unable, from the strong attraction of the one, to attach itself to the other; and though there certainly was no great magnetic influence in the anticipated interview with his father, still he could not prevent his ideas from taking a sudden flight from Malmesbridge House to Cavendish-square, and as suddenly returning, while he also completely failed in fixing them to any one object. They were consequently never with him when he required their assistance to reply to Lord Malmesbridge's questions and observations, who having received one or two *mal à propos* answers, guessed the perturbation of his young friend's mind was solely caused by the expectation of a meeting with his father; and leaving

him to his reflections, turned his own thoughts to the last night's debate.

Arrived at Mr. Nugent's, Lord Malmesbridge was shown into the study of that gentleman, while Hyde, glad to escape, ran up stairs to greet his mother and sister.

Through the kind intercession of the marquis, the anger of Mr. Nugent was turned aside; and in a quarter of an hour, Hyde was sent for by his father, when an assuring glance from Lord Malmesbridge gave him courage to hope that all was overlooked.

"Hyde," said Mr. Nugent, seriously, and rather sternly, "I forgive you; and I trust you see the folly of your conduct in its proper light. May it prove a useful lesson to you! for it has been dearly purchased. I will not add to the remorse I am sure you feel, by telling you all a parent suffers from the misconduct of a child; but though I shall never recur to the subject, I cannot for your own sake wish that your feelings should be so callous as to cause a quick forget-

fulness of what has passed. And now," added he, with a voice different from the severe tone in which he began, "here is my hand."

The marquis also shook Hyde by the hand, while the glistening eyes of the latter showed that he was not insensible to kindness or reproof. Lord Malmesbridge, having succeeded in his good offices, was about to withdraw, saying that he had but half got through Lord K***'s speech of last night to the old tune.

"I am glad to hear it was so good," said Mr. Nugent, "that you wish your eyes as well as ears to be regaled with it."

"My good friend, my eyes *were* regaled with the beginning of it last night; for I felt its soporific effect so decidedly, that I was obliged to go home and get to bed with all possible speed."

After a little more good-humoured conversation, in which Hyde, however, did not presume to join, the marquis departed, riding home through the park, and sending his groom back with the horse our hero had ridden.

To say that Mr. Nugent soon forgot the circumstance of Hyde's expulsion from Oxford, would be absurd and untrue. He was not the sort of man to harp upon a disagreeable subject, once discussed and disposed of, even if he had not given a promise of silence; but the parent who could immediately bury in oblivion the thought, that all the fruit of his care and anxiety for a beloved son had been thus blighted before ripening, that that son had been dismissed in disgrace from the first university in the world, all chance of his arriving at academic honours blasted, and perhaps fearing the sting of shame might greatly influence his future conduct through life;—that man must be endowed with a heart fraught with something more than human qualities, could he think of them without feeling the keenest pangs of regret and grief; or more properly, his heart must be callous to all the finer and better sentiments of our nature; for, far beyond the short-lived remorse of a child for the fault unwarily committed, of

which he is unable to foresee the consequences, is the lively sorrow, the lasting and poignant, though silent bitterness of reflection, with which the parent's heart is pierced; and oh! little, little do children think as they grow up, when heedlessly they rush into the paths of intemperance, vice, or dishonour, or sacrifice reputation, family credit, perhaps life and soul, what sufferings they must cause to the best and tenderest of fathers or mothers. Did the offspring of such parents oftener think of this, how many duels would be avoided! how many causes of quarrels, the inevitable effect of which must be the risk of life to one, or perhaps two human beings, would be shunned with a pious horror! and how much concatenated sin and misery would be thus turned aside!

Hyde Nugent had a disposition feelingly alive to the slightest excitement, and we must give him due credit for experiencing a proper degree of remorse not only for his late

disgrace, but for the wound his hand had caused Birstal, whom, though he had evinced so rancorous and vindictive a disposition, Hyde could not help thinking he had punished too severely. "And yet," he would say to himself, "was it not his own fault?—why did he give me the lie, or why not make an apology?" And then conscience would put in her word. "Why did you allege a thing to be the case, of the truth of which you were not convinced? You never were in Leicestershire; what, then, could you know of the matter, except from hearsay; and why persist in your assertion in direct opposition to that of a man who had been all his life in the county, and one whom you knew but too ready to find cause of quarrel with you, independently of his being at the time heated with wine?" All these arguments of conscience were unanswered, save by a deep sigh which confessed that they spoke truth, as in fact conscience generally does.

In the evening Hyde retired early to his room, and wrote to Mr. Green to ascertain the state of Birstal's wound, which his vivid imagination had magnified into something much more terrible than it really was. He then penned a few lines to Burgoyne to inform him of his safe arrival, and of the way affairs had been settled ; and having finished his epistolary task, he pushed aside his writing-table and fell into a reverie. What his reflections were it is impossible now to determine; we can only surmise that they turned upon the events of the day, and that his last thoughts as he rose to undress were moving in the direction of Malmesbridge House, for he exclaimed, " Beautiful, beautiful Lady Georgina!"

And was Augusta St. Quentin unthought of? our readers will ask. Had he forgotten her already? and should he have so soon dismissed her from his recollection? We never said he had loved her, nor indeed had he; but much we fear that his boyish attentions and her warm

feelings had led that sweet girl to think that "more was meant than met the ear." Indeed, Master Hyde! if you have been trifling with her invaluable affections, we must leave you to your fate, and let the world pronounce the sentence you deserve. Let us see whether it will pass such conduct over as the mere thoughtless every-day whim or folly of youth.

CHAP. VI.

Romeo. Peace, peace! thou talk'st of nothing.

Mercutio. True, I talk of dreams.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE noise and thunder of a rout at the magnificent mansion of a rich neighbour, where once "Hope told a flattering tale," but in which fashion and extravagance have since been playing the devil, (pardon us, reader!) effectually prevented our hero from tasting for some time the sweets of repose. In fact repose he felt little of, when sleep did at length visit him; for strange to say, the dreams which the fatigue and exertion that

had worn him out yesterday had prevented him from being cursed with, now visited his imagination in all their changeful wildness and incomprehensibility.

> Strange state of being! for 'tis still to be,
> Senseless to feel, and with seal'd eyes to see.

Mrs. and Miss Nugent had gone to the * * * s, but revelry suited not with the present state of mind in which our hero found himself: besides, independent of his being unknown to the amiable rout-giver, (and amiable she really is, though uncharitable people say riches have turned her head) he would have gone to no place had he received ten dozen invitations, where he thought there was little chance of meeting the Lady Georgina Capel.

Sleep, we have said, after some time closed the eyes of Hyde Nugent, but only half performing his friendly duty, he had forgotten to warn off Phantasy, which waved the branch of elm over the sleeper's head, and

racked, not "rocked," his brain. The events of the past day were unaccountably mixed up with those of the evening before, and occurrences still farther back. Sometimes the *ballet* swam before his eyes in all its glittering splendour; then the scene changed to Malmesbridge House, where he beheld Lady Georgina, in the very dress she had that morning worn, enter and take a letter off the table, and smiling, leave the room; and he saw her drapery floating on the breeze as the door closed, and yet, although he felt she had departed, still he saw her there. And now the person changed from Lady Georgina to himself, all wounded and bleeding. Suddenly the scene changed to Nugent Hall. He was in the mournful suite of apartments, with its ancient hangings and old armour, and there appeared Augusta St. Quentin, radiant with beauty, though melancholy, while her long dark hair streamed about her shoulders as she held up her arms, and averted her head

from him. Again he saw Lady Georgina descending from the coronetted carriage in a magnificent white dress, with her perfect foot, and her ancle in all its symmetry setting off the silk which enclosed it. Suddenly he heard the wheels of a vehicle rattling, in which he felt himself against his will conveyed to Oxford; and although the dream had in a few moments taken him thither, he had counted every tree along the road,—every mile, every house he recognised: the journey seemed to take a hundred years to accomplish; yet he was there all too soon, for on the bloody ground of the duel he found himself passively exposed to the vengeance of the bleeding and ghastly Birstal, whom he fancied dead, yet possessing the power to kill, and thirsting for revenge. Quicker than thought, he was again in town, with his father's stern countenance and form bending over him, which suddenly turned into the bloody Birstal, from whom he vainly endeavoured to get away.

With the effort he awoke, uttering a faint cry, and perceived his father standing by his bed-side, yet not with a stern, but rather a pitying look, at the sufferings his son was undergoing.

"My poor boy!" said Mr. Nugent, putting one hand to his son's forehead, while with the other he held the light away from his eyes: "my poor boy, I am sorry I awoke you."

"Sorry, Sir?" exclaimed Hyde, stretching out his burning hand; "you stand there as my guardian angel. It was not you that awoke me, but dreadful Birstal." And he looked fearfully round as if still afraid of some horrid shape; so much may the strongest mind be unhinged by a dream.

"What was I saying? Oh, Sir, I had the most frightful dream, and yet—— no, it *was* all, all horrible. Pray let me have a light. Oh, that rattle of wheels, and that eternal road, and Birstal, Birstal!"

"Compose yourself, my dear child!" said his

father: "you are quite feverish. I will stay with you awhile."

"What o'clock is it?"

"Two. Your mother and sister have not yet returned from the * * * s, and it is the noise of the carriages going away from thence that has disturbed you. They must soon be home. Let me draw back these curtains! no wonder you cannot rest with such confined air!"

In about a quarter of an hour Mrs. and Miss Nugent returned from their party; and as Louisa proceeded to her room, Mrs. Nugent seeing Hyde's door ajar, went in.

"Arabella," said her husband, "this boy is quite feverish; we must give him something cooling, some lemonade or something."

Hyde protested he did not want the "something cooling," the "lemonade or something," though he was not so ungracious or ungrateful as to mimic his father. The sight of Mrs. Nugent in her full evening dress diverted his mind from dwelling on the strange dream he had

had, and his parents seeing him restored to a state of tranquillity, left the room.

Hyde rose from his bed of unrest at an early hour pale and unrefreshed, and finding there was no chance of getting breakfast for some time, he strolled out to breathe the morning air; and taking his way up Harley-street, and compassing one ring of the Regent's Park, he returned appetized and invigorated to his breakfast.

The harassing night had left its traces upon his countenance. At breakfast his father looked little less melancholy, but a benign smile told Hyde there was nothing now remaining in that kind parental heart but compassion for his sufferings. No bad unforgiving spirit rankled there, but sorrow for past events which could not now be recalled.

"Hyde," said Mr. Nugent, "after breakfast I think you should call on Lord Malmesbridge and thank him for his kindness in coming here with you yesterday."

"I intended to do so, Sir," replied his son, "if your horses were disengaged."

"The horses are all at your service, if you prefer riding to a walk, which I should think would do you more good. However, please yourself; but go early, or you will probably not find him at home. We are all asked to a party there for—what day is it, Arabella? But we promised to go to Lady Beachy's in Portland-place, and Mrs. Bellmont's; and really the Malmesbridges and these people are too far asunder to compass all. My poor horses!"

Mrs. Nugent and Louisa thought that the three parties might all very easily be compassed, and seemed determined in their own minds, that if it were left to them, the "poor horses" should have just as much work as the most party-going horses in town. And Hyde on this occasion took a shorter time to make his mind up to accept an invitation, should it be tendered, than he ever did before or since.

Having made *une toilette à merveille*, our

hero set out about twelve o'clock, attended by a groom. The object of this visit to Malmesbridge House was of course ostensibly that of thanking the marquis for his kind attentions, but truly, we must we fear confess, that of seeing the marquis's daughter. As he rode slowly down Bond-street, at that early hour as desolate and deserted as a street in Herculaneum or Pompeii, his thoughts preceded him; and in the pleasing anticipation of seeing Lady Georgina Capel, he forgot for a time the terrific dream of the last night. But, as is often the case with others, Hyde found it impossible to prevent totally the recurrence of unpleasant thoughts, or completely to shake off the influence of the fearful vision. He dreaded to hear that Birstal was dead, that a mortification had ensued, and that the next day he should receive news to that effect. A hundred dreary forebodings filled his mind as he gave the letters to be put into the post-office, which were as suddenly put to flight by the image of Lady

Georgina flashing across his mind. He quickened his pace, and soon arrived at his destination.

The party he met there was the same as that of the day before; the two Lord Capels not being much at home though in town; and Lord Brandsford, the eldest son, living entirely in the country, settled down, from a gay butterfly of fashion, into a mere humdrum married man—a change very much for the better.

Lord Malmesbridge had communicated to his family the circumstances in which our hero stood; had related the duel, the expulsion, &c. and making light of his own services, he told them of Hyde's having now been restored to favour at home. It is not surprising then, that Hyde should have created an interest in the lady part of the noble house of Malmesbridge, corresponding to that felt for him by its head, or perhaps greater. The fair never deny their sympathy to the unfortunate, though the latter may also have been faulty.

As Hyde entered the room, the whole party cordially shook hands with him; very ill-bred, no doubt! but you know marquises and marchionesses may do as they please, and can be kind and friendly where the dignity of a viscount, or baron, of late creation, might be in danger of being degraded or contaminated by touching the hand of a commoner, unless indeed he be a member of the privy council, or has it in his power to do any of their "young friends" a service: then he is "a person one must be civil to."

Young Nugent, after the first inquiries, &c. were made and answered, took an opportunity of thanking Lord Malmesbridge, whom he had secured in a window, for his good offices in Cavendish-square.

"Say not a word about it," replied the marquis; "the favour, as you are pleased to call it, was not so very great. You dine with us today, Nugent?"

Hyde replied in the affirmative with a bow.

"I am obliged to run away," continued his

lordship, " but I leave you in charge of Lady Malmesbridge, and I shall hope to see you again at seven."

" Which will be eight," said the marchioness; " not but that we shall be most happy to see you as early as you please to come."

" Hum!" thought Hyde, while a slight blush tinged his cheek; for his countenance was a dreadful tell-tale of what was passing in his mind. It was perceived by Lady Malmesbridge, who far from having intended to be rude, wished to be as kind and civil as possible. She could not have shown a change of colour, for she wore rouge, neither was she subject to the awkward sensation of blushing, being too much a woman of the world to be thrown off her guard by any thing; but she felt it was necessary to repair the *contre-temps,* as our hero had taken it; and while her daughters seemed slightly to participate in the heightened complexion of Hyde, she proceeded to repair her fault.

" Mr. Nugent," said she, as if she had not

perceived what was passing; "Mr. Nugent, Lord Malmesbridge tells me you have been getting into some scrape at Oxford, but he says that, considering all things, you were not so very, very much to blame. But I believe I ought not to tell you this, nor a number of fine things that people have been saying of you; for I am afraid you will grow conceited, and we have already such a host of this class of persons in town, that we cannot allow you to join the corps. However, you are to be petted and made much of; now tell me, what shall I do to please the little boy? You know I was at your father's last summer, and must therefore be good to his son. Shall I take you to a toy-shop, or shall we give it some *bonbons*, or will you go with us to King's, where there is a most beautiful Strelitzia Regina which I must secure before any one else finds it out? But you rode here, and would perhaps prefer taking your canter in the park to dowagering with two or three old ladies?" The Marchioness ended

with one of her sweetest smiles of inquiry. Hyde was delighted. "Oh!" exclaimed he, "if your ladyship will but allow me to accompany you in your drive, I promise to be the very best boy that ever lived, even without the bribe of the *bonbons* or toys. Allow me to send my horses back."

The bell was rung, and the horses remanded to their stable; the groom not sorry to be released from his durance in the court-yard,—a sort of thing which, even on a fine day, cannot in the month of March be particularly agreeable.

A general conversation now ensued, which was interrupted by the Marchioness's telling Lady Georgina to show Mr. Nugent the prints that had that morning been sent from Colnaghi's, of some views near Knorridge Park, a place of the Malmesbridges in ——— shire.

While Lady Georgina was engaged in the not unpleasing task her mother had imposed on her, Lady Malmesbridge and her other daughter were discussing a knotty point of ribbons

and satins, in which the words *ponceau* and *peach-coloured* were occasionally heard. Leaving them to settle which was the most becoming, we return to Hyde, who, as his fair entertainer showed him the prints in question, pronounced this to be splendid, and that magnificent, while in fact he was intent only upon the admiration of her ladyship's own beautiful face. She at last caught his eyes fixed on her own, and blushed at the intensity of his gaze.

Hyde saw he was detected. "Lady Georgina," said he, quickly, "do you know I had the strangest dream about you last night——"

The lady blushed more deeply than before, while she replied, "And I too had my dream. It was about—about—at least, that is, I dreamt I saw you at the Opera; so absurd you know! for though I was there on Tuesday, you must have been on your way from Oxford, by my father's account."

"Strange!" said Hyde, thinking to himself, though speaking aloud.

"What is strange, Mr. Nugent?" said Lady Georgina.

"Strange? I beg your pardon," said Hyde: "did you say any thing was strange?"

"No, but you said so, Mr. Nugent."

"Did I?—I *was* at the Opera on Tuesday; *I* also dreamt last night that I saw *you* there; but such a fearful dream followed, of blood and death,—shall I tell you?"

"Good Heavens, Mr. Nugent, how shocking! No, no, pray do not tell me any thing more," exclaimed Lady Georgina, shuddering: "but was all this about me? did you dream that *I* was dead? how dreadful!"

"No, oh no! that would have been *too* dreadful indeed: no, you were alive, and beautiful," added he, in a lower voice, "as you are at this moment."

"Mr. Nugent, you are very odd!"

"My dream was but the counterpart of what did really happen: I dreamt I stood in your way as you got out of your carriage, and you

had a white satin dress on, which your dark cloak but half concealed from my view, and I waited to let you pass. Afterwards I asked Captain Herbert of the Guards, or Bridgewater, who you were, and he told me you were one of the Lady G *** s; and then my surprise at seeing you here yesterday, and——"

"But you did not dream all this?—That horrid Captain Herbert! how very extraordinary!" said Lady Georgina.

"Oh," continued Hyde, "the rest of my dream was too horrid, and had it not been for your being a party in it, I verily believe would have killed me altogether. But do you know Captain Herbert?"

"Oh yes, and I can't bear him; I danced with him once at Almack's, and afterwards I met him at my aunt Bolingbridge's, and then he was so disagreeable at the Opera! But I do not recollect seeing you there on Tuesday, though I suppose I must, or ———"

"Well, good people," said Lady Malmes-

bridge, joining them, "have you finished with your portfolio? I find Mr. Nugent is trying the effect of Knorridge *renversé*. Oh, my china-room! I see the windows of it upside down. Pray, pray, Mr. Nugent, put Knorridge on its legs again."

Hyde laughed, coloured slightly, and replaced the print.

"But have you seen them all? They are very pretty, are they not? Georgina, my dear, your sister is gone to get ready, and you had better do the same, as the carriage was ordered early. Mr. Nugent, you shall give me your arm to the luncheon-room, where the young ladies will find us when they are ready, *tête-à-tête*."

All these arrangements having been made and duly executed, they drove to King's, where the Strelitzia Regina was admired, and ordered to be sent, with various other plants, for the adornment and replenishing of Lady Malmesbridge's conservatory.

This drive Hyde registered in his mind as the most delightful he had ever taken. On

their return there was some shopping to be done, and as they stopped at Cooper's, what a different scene was Bond-street from what Hyde had witnessed it in the morning! Then he, the sole equestrian, save his groom, had ridden slowly down its melancholy length, deserted by almost every human being, and either end enveloped in thick misty gloom, through which in vain the rays of the sun seemed trying to penetrate. Then, nought was to be seen but the slovenly slippered shopman, standing at the door, or bearing some parcel to its destination; or a solitary sergeant of the Guards in all the pomp of lace and pipe-clay, with the order-book under his arm, seeking his officer, who, snoring at his lodgings on the first floor of some milliner's, deigns not to give the respectable orderly a civil answer; unless, indeed, some field-day is approaching, when, as the officer will probably be obliged to the sergeant for the word of command, he thinks it his interest to treat the man like a human being.

Now, at four o'clock, the sun beaming out brilliantly, (for it was the end of March) what crowds of splendid equipages filled the street! What beaux military and civil adorned the *trottoir!* There was to be seen the handsome hussar, run up from Hounslow or Brighton for a week, with moustache and imperial, and clinking ringing spur of fearful length;—the sublime cut of his apparel, the whole man, so different and so easily told from those who aped him; there was to be seen the demi-pay colonel of infantry, with steel spur and black stock, and comfortable red face, telling of many a bottle of port discussed at *après-diner* of the mess. Here lounged the man of fashion and landed property, an M. P. and possessing I don't know how much a year; there the man of fashion and no property, but what rightly belongs to hungry creditors,—an unhappy being, some thousands worse than nothing, with the King's Bench in reversion. Never mind, he has had his day; and may again, who knows? The officer of the Guards

has now risen, shaved, dressed, perhaps breakfasted, if he was not too fresh over night, for "champagne, and all that sort of thing," play the devil with a man's appetite next morning. He has looked in at the club, walked down St. James's-street and the length of Pall Mall with a brother guardsman *en grand costume,* and returning to Bond-street, where he has ordered the groom to be in waiting with his horse, *le voilà!*

Lady Malmesbridge's carriage having skilfully threaded its devious way through a crowd of brilliant equipages up to Cooper's door, Hyde assisted at the debarkation of the ladies, and thanking the Marchioness for the pleasure of his drive, wished them good morning.

At half after seven he was leaving Cavendish-square in his father's carriage for Malmesbridge House, where upon his arrival he found himself nearly the first of what proved afterwards to be a large dinner party. Lord Malmesbridge introduced our hero to his sons, Lords William and

Henry Capel, two tall, pale, gentlemanlike-looking young men, by neither of whom of course was Hyde taken the least notice of; a circumstance which caused him rather joy than sorrow, as he had thereby a better opportunity of conversing with their sisters. These two young lords were nevertheless very good fellows, when known; but they were new in the world, and thought it fine to be exclusive. Hyde promised speedily to become a favourite with the lady part of the family. Lady Malmesbridge was a woman who could put on the Marchioness to the full when she pleased it, or she could be very affable and pleasant with any one to whom she took a fancy. Happily for young Nugent, he was one of these; and while other young men higher in rank than himself were received with an *accueil* any thing but *gracieux* though perfectly graceful, and which, were icebergs capable of feeling, would have made an iceberg shiver, he experienced always the most flattering reception. We speak of him as he was during the after

time he remained in town; for from the slight acquaintance which subsisted between the parties at the time of his first dinner at Malmesbridge House, he could scarcely expect more than common politeness, though even then there was a peculiar kindness in the manner of the Marchioness towards him.

The company were now fast assembling. There was the Duke of B. and his duchess; there were two earls and their countesses, an earl without his countess, and a countess without her earl; there was Prince Rudolstadt, Sir Freedom Arachne, Lady and two Misses Plantagenet, Captain Bridgewater, and Colonel Bluemantle. After a short conversation with the Ladies Capel, Hyde ceded them to the attentions of the German prince and the gallant colonel, and retiring to a window, accosted Captain Bridgewater, by whom he was introduced to Lord Abberford, the captain's father. Dinner announced, our hero, by one of those chances not uncommon at the interesting moment, when you are doomed to be happy or

miserable for some two hours, according to the lady whom you may happen to lead down, found himself almost touching Lady Georgina, to whom he lost no time in presenting his arm.

Happy, happy Hyde! what were thy feelings, as on descending the *escalier*, and conducting her to the dining-room, thy electrified arm felt the light hand of the beautiful Georgina Capel touching it, and thy sanguine mind anticipated the pleasure of sitting next her all dinner time! Alas! in this, as in other things, thou wert doomed to disappointment. On taking their places at table, Hyde found only an odd seat vacant, when he looked for two; there was also one next to Lord Malmesbridge, on the other side, and these were the only two that remained unoccupied, from the circumstance of Hyde and Lady Georgina being nearly the last to enter the room. Oh, what a different feeling was that of our hero now, to what he experienced two minutes before! Lord Malmesbridge perceived the difficulty, and called his

daughter round, placing her next him, (for she was papa's own pet,) and nearly opposite to our hero; the only consolation in his distress. Himself he found between Lord Abberford and the eldest Miss Plantagenet, with the latter of whom, as a *pis aller*, he made up his mind to converse during dinner. Perhaps also he might have exerted his powers of pleasing with a view of not appearing a fool in the eyes of Lady Georgina opposite; but to his infinite surprise, the essay was a complete failure, for not one word beyond a monosyllable could he educe from the fair one beside him. Divers topics were started; but whether operas or sermons, drawing-rooms, dress, or the last new novel, there was "no speculation" in the fine eyes to which he looked for a responsive expression to his own animated manner and remarks. He was surprised, we have said; he was astonished. Can this fine woman be a fool? is she a statue, a mere piece of still life? He was tempted to say, "Unreal mockery, hence!" for he began to get tired

of throwing away the pearls of his conversation. Could she be a saint? he had tried her upon divinity, but it was orthodox: he mentioned Lady Wetherby, but still he had no success. "I have it," thought he; "she is a blue." And he played a galvanic battery against her; he tried her with chemistry and electricity; but potash and soda, white heat and gas, hydrogen or oxygen, were equally out of her way; nor could he elicit one spark from this flinty damsel; and instead of laying the blame on his own capabilities of conversation, he set her down for an exhausted receiver.

"Oh!" thought Hyde, "I give you up; you are either very proud or very stupid."

She certainly was not the latter; for the Plantagenets are clever, generally speaking; but that the former accusation did not apply to her, we will not say. In fact, Nugent was very soon convinced that pride was the rock she split on,—overweening, preposterous pride; for turning to Lord Malmesbridge, she talked with him

for some minutes with the greatest ease and ability, touching upon some of the every-day subjects which our hero had started; displaying infinite tact and cleverness, and keeping up the ball with a degree of nicety, equally distant from the fulsomeness of a *bas bleu* and the silly nonsense of a mere superficial town-bred woman of fashion. The Plantagenets are, in fact, not people of the first fashion, having lived too much in the country; and perhaps in this they have the advantage of the regular, thorough-paced, metropolitan exclusives, who visit town as infallibly for their three or four months as the woodcocks visit England in their southern *trajet*, though for a more certain period. The Plantagenets are therefore *un peu sauvages;* an infinite advantage, if they did not, when they *do* come up, think it necessary to be so excessively high. We rather like a little country manner; it gives a zest to town society, relieving one's ears and eyes from the eternal, monotonous absurdity that one is for ever bored

with in town. But, unfortunately, people who come to London only now and then, think it indispensable to do the sublime; and like travellers in a strange country without a guide, or rather the bear in a boat, lose themselves in the unknown element on which they have embarked.

All the pride of all the Nugents rushed to the support of our hero on perceiving the truth; his lip curled, and his nostril dilated with disdain, while, almost turning his back upon Miss Plantagenet, he sought a temporary relief from silence. But he saw that all this had not passed unperceived of Lady Georgina, and he could not be silent, neither could he be *sage*. He rushed headlong into a rather louder conversation with Lord Abberford than the rules of *bienseance* of a London dinner-table prescribed or permitted; and by thus showing that he was piqued, he gave Miss Plantagenet additional satisfaction. It was perhaps great presumption in him to have addressed himself to her without having first been introduced; but it is natural to

expect that every person whom you meet at the dinner-table of a marquis in town, is a gentleman; besides, it is the duty of all the lords of the creation to entertain the ladies of the creation next whom fate may place them; and in trying to amuse his next neighbour, Hyde certainly did not go beyond the rules of good breeding. When he had spoken a few minutes to the earl, young Nugent sank into silence, his eye unconsciously resting upon Lady Georgina. After having answered at random some time some questions of Lord Abberford's about an affair at Oxford in which a young friend of his had been engaged, his lordship changed the subject to his son Captain Bridgewater; from him to his late ship the Dædalus; and from her to the malady, which, common in His Majesty's vessels of war, had caused her untimely dissolution; namely, the dry-rot.

"A sad thing, Mr. Nugent!" said the peer, "that it should spread so alarmingly, and that nothing should as yet have been discovered to check its progress."

"Sad indeed, my lord!" replied Hyde, quite *distrait*, yet imagining he was perfectly informed as to the subject Lord Abberford was enlarging on.

"One has recommended salting, another sinking, and a third coal-tar," continued Lord Abberford.

"Salting, sinking, and coal-tar!" thought our hero in amazement; "very strange!"

"Sir Robert Seppings's plan seemed the best," said his lordship.

"Sir John Sinclair's you must mean, my lord," said Hyde, who had never heard of Sir Robert Seppings before, and could not tell what the name had to do with any agricultural or farming affairs, much less with the rot in sheep, which, having caught some part of Lord Abberford's argumentum, he had wisely presumed was the topic then under discussion. "Sir John Sinclair's, you must mean," said he aloud, though he thought it excessively odd conversation for a dinner-table.

"Sir John Sinclair!" exclaimed the peer in undisguised astonishment.

"Yes, my lord; my father lost thirty the year before last, and not half that number last year by adopting his plan."

"Your father must have quite a navy, my young friend! Is he a member of the yacht-club? I never heard Sir Freedom mention him as connected with it; though I have read his speeches while he was a member of a more numerous, though perhaps," continued his lordship, elevating his eyebrows, "not a more distinguished body,—I mean the House of Commons,—with infinite delight and edification, though our opinions might sometimes have clashed," concluded he with a smile.

"He is not a member of the club, but ——"

"I beg your pardon a minute," interrupted Lord Abberford, "but I must observe that though the worthy baronet in the north is perfectly conversant with a plough on shore, I much doubt whether he knows any thing of

ploughing the ocean. But my good young friend, I fear we are at cross purposes; pray now, what *were* you thinking of?"

Hyde explained.

The peer laughed. "I must not be too hard on you, however," said he, "as I see where your thoughts are now fixed; at least if I may judge from the direction of your eyes."

Hyde was in a moment scarlet, but his eyes were directed at the time towards the second Miss Plantagenet, who sat nearly opposite; and recollecting himself, he felt relieved.

"But," continued Lord Abberford, "I must in friendship give you my compassion, knowing, as I do, that the lovely cause of your abstraction is about to give her hand to a happier man."

This was a mistake of his lordship's both ways; *mais n'importe.*

"However," added he, smiling, "perhaps I ought to be more cautious in touching that string."

"Not at all," said Hyde: "I never had the

pleasure of meeting that lady before. Every one must admire her; but for myself, I am completely heart-whole."

As he pronounced these words, his glance again rested fortuitously on Lady Georgina: their eyes met, and dropped; while a slight blush might by a keen observer have been seen to mount for a moment into the cheeks of either. It however passed unheeded. The noble lord on his right turned to converse with the noble lady on *his* right, and the attention of our hero was arrested by a challenge from the marquis to a glass of champagne.

A leading topic was now discussed largely at the lower end of the table; and Hyde, being rather new in the world, was not a little surprised at the merciless way in which the unfortunate subject, *malgré* the presence of servants, was reviled and condemned by a set of sister fashionables, who had all pretended the greatest friendship for her, while her *ton*, and the magnificence of her parties, made her looked up to,

before she fell, as one of the brightest stars in the firmament of London.

The conversation took another turn as the dessert was placed upon the table. Sir Freedom Arachne was a great craniologist, and entertained Lady Georgina with a lecture on skulls: he had been a warrior also, having served with much credit in the early part of the peninsular war. The "flower of chivalry" he might have been styled, though rather fond of trumpeting forth his deeds. Her ladyship was not however particularly attentive; and after helping her to some pine apple, Sir Freedom talked across to Lord Malmesbridge on the subject of elections, in one of which he had been a candidate. Colonel Bluemantle squeaked out something about Epsom races, hoping, when the time came, that Lady Malmesbridge would enlighten the world by her presence at the course, the rather as he was to ride for *amateur* stakes, when her smiles would greatly tend to his bearing off the palm. The duke spoke of the last night's

debate across the table to Lord Narrowby; and Lady Malmesbridge, finding the House brought upon the *tapis*, looked at the duchess, and rose to leave the room, much to the annoyance of Prince Rudolstadt, who was engaged in a very interesting conversation with Lady Elizabeth, who however was not sorry at the interruption.

After the ladies had retired, Lord Henry Capel moved round and placed himself next young Nugent, talked of Tattersal's, the last Doncaster St. Leger and the next, found his new acquaintance knew something about a horse, and offered a bet on the Duke of * * * 's Whisker colt at the ensuing Epsom, which was declined. The name struck somewhat disagreeably upon the ear of Hyde; and turning the conversation, a ride in the Park was agreed on for the next day.

The gentlemen did not sit long after dinner: perhaps the time was purposely made shorter in compliment to the foreign prince, who had spent his latter years more in France, engaged in di-

plomatic missions, than in his own Germany. But people do not sit now soaking at their wine as they did some few years back, and if this be the result of our intercourse with the continent, it certainly is a beneficial one: we wish we could adduce more instances wherein the communication with our more southern and volatile neighbours has been attended with good results to English manners and customs, or at any rate the latter. We have perhaps too much of the *véritable rostbif* in our composition, though we are by no means ashamed thereof. But you will say, fair and gallant Gallomaniacs, "Who is we? or who are you? and who cares about you?" We answer, "*Mons. Jean Taureau;*" and thus we have rendered the horrid name pronounceable to the most fastidious.

"Do you ever ride, Lady Georgina?" said our hero, sipping his coffee, and standing by the side of her ladyship, as she graced a magnificent ottoman, upon which had also chosen to place himself Prince Rudolstadt, who seemed

endeavouring at an insinuation into the good graces of all the Malmesbridge family.

"Do you ever ride, Lady Georgina?"

"Whenever our particularly affectionate and gallant brothers will accompany us," replied she, "Elizabeth and I take our canter in the Park."

Hyde would be *so* flattered, *so* proud, *so* glad, if they would allow him sometimes to accompany them.

"Oh! we are such early people, that I fear you would be still sleeping, while we are making the grand tour."

"At what hour, then, do you grace the ring?"

"About twelve usually; long before any one is in the Park, perhaps before half the people are out of their first nap; amongst whom shall I class Mr. Nugent?"

"Scarcely a fair insinuation, Lady Georgina, after my early appearance here for the last two days."

"Early I allow; but you looked very sleepy this morning."

"Well might I. Do you forget the dream I told you of? Oh, I had passed a miserable night; so full of ugly sights ——"

"Thank you, thank you, Mr. Nugent," said Lady Georgina, laughing; "do you recollect whom you told me your dream was partly about?"

"A thousand pardons, fairest lady! if you had not interrupted me, I should have added, 'presently came by a shadow like an angel with bright hair.'"

"Oh, but then you must have been false, fleeting, perjured!"

"Oh hard sentence! Name it not, I pray you."

Lord William finding that his brother patronized Nugent,—for his mother and sister's doing so went no way with him, neither had his father's introduction been at all a sure road to an acquaintance,—but seeing Henry, who could not fail to be correct in every thing he did, engaged

in conversation with our hero after dinner, and hearing it was a Tattersal and a Doncaster one, now came up, and attacked him upon the same subject; he was therefore obliged to turn away from Lady Georgina, which gave the Prince an opportunity of coming in. As he perceived her young ladyship's eye glance favourably upon Nugent while they spoke together, and she was not his own game, he thought he could not please her more than by praising our hero, thus intending to pave indirectly the way to a corresponding kindness on Lady Georgina's part, and a series of agreeable *tête-à-têtes* with her sister through her assistance, which by this circuitous method of undermining rather than taking by storm her unsuspecting little heart of friendship, in praising herself or Nugent, no matter which, he had no difficulty in promising himself. Besides, he knew that "*les personnes galantes sont toujours bien aises qu'un prétexte leur donne lieu de parler de ceux qui les aiment.*" At least this was a

maxim in France, and he took it for granted (for he knew not how short a time the parties had been acquainted) that Lady Georgina was perfectly aware of a certain passion existing in the breast of Hyde Nugent. He therefore commenced a high-flown strain of compliment upon our unconscious hero, in the course of which he called him *plus beau que l'Amour*, adding many other terms of the most fulsome, insincere, and absurd flattery.

Georgina knew not what to answer: she was afraid of assenting too readily, and she equally feared that the Prince might construe silence into an acknowledgment, though a taci one, of feeling more interested in the object of these praises than she chose to confess.

We know not how far Monsieur le Prince might have proceeded, had not the Duke of B * * * come up and asked Lady Georgina for a song, and astonished Prince Rudolstadt by taking her ladyship's place on the ottoman, and entering into a profound argument with

him, instead of listening to the music he had entreated for.

"*Mais c'est malhonnête donc!*" thought the prince; and to a stranger and a foreigner it must certainly have seemed rather *sauvage*, especially in a duke; but the Duke of B*** was in fact so intimate with the Capels, that he treated the young people almost as his own children, and Lady Georgina thanked him from the bottom of her heart for the release he had given her.

Most of the party were now hushed to hear the beautiful warbling of the Ladies Capel; and Nugent, in the ecstatic thrill it gave him, felt all his faculties suspended, and himself as it were chained to the spot. Could Mozart have risen from his mother earth, or Rossini have transported himself from Paris, they must in rapture have confessed that this execution of their music equalled, if not surpassed, their warmest dreams, even in the inspiring moment of com-

position. And this was without flourish or parade; their sweet full voices were as natural to them as the clear and beautiful note of the nightingale; and while they sang without the slightest affectation, their harmonious strains rising and falling, blending into each other with the most perfect and heavenly melody, rapt the intoxicated senses in such delight, that for some minutes after they concluded no voice was heard, no distinct sound was uttered, nothing save the low murmur of gratification, impossible to be expressed by conjoint words, running from one to another of the noble and the beautiful there collected.

The company soon after began to depart, some for their homes, some for parties where they were likely to stay, already tired, till three or four o'clock in the morning. Hyde made his bow with the others, having to his great disappointment failed in arranging a ride with his fair friends on the morrow.

As he wended his way up the eternal length of gas-lighted Bond-street in his progress to Cavendish-square, the watchmen were crying twelve. "So late!" thought he; "and yet how early it appeared when I was wishing *her* good night!" Fast whirling carriages crossed him at every turn, hurrying their fair freights from one quadrille ball to another, or rather from the quiet home to the noisy rout. "Drive, drive!" he exclaimed, as the far-flashing equipages thundered away in the distance; "crowd to your suffocating rooms; for me no atmosphere is fit to breathe but where *she* is, no light but where *she* shines." We will not give the reader any more of our friend's rhapsody, as with thin shoe and noiseless step he walked towards home. He bounded across Oxford-street, and presently found himself in the quieter though more gloomy precincts of Cavendish-square. Once more at home, he feared he should feel a kind of dread at retiring to rest, but his mind insen-

sibly dwelt upon Lady Georgina, and the sweet thoughts of her as he fell asleep kept aloof all other *shapes*.

Not for a long time had Hyde listened to such beautiful music as that which he had heard at Malmesbridge House. The magnificent instrument, and the sumptuously sweet volumes of voices, rendered his feelings ecstatic; and they returned the next morning when he awoke with perhaps even greater force at the recollection of the scene; and the few familiar bars which continued to haunt his memory, were so different from the vile inharmonious straining he had lately been condemned to hear! for two years had nearly passed since he had witnessed his sister's performance, and if we except that of his continental tour, he had heard no vocal music. The instrumental consisted in, it may be, one of the furies running down, for instance, "Steibelt's Storm," overtaking it with the strides of a destroyer, slap-dash through rain, wind,

and thunder, at the same prodigious rate, faster than the fierce hurricane, " louder than the loud ocean," without taste or feeling, without waiting the required time to imitate or indicate the falling rain-drops as the storm lulls, or giving the mournful expression of the abated whirlwind, and the mischief it has done; but thump, thump, clink, clash, and clatter, mercilessly driving over the inoffensive keys of the instrument in a barbarous manner, fit to rouse the disquieted composer from his grave; and far other feelings would he have had, were such to be the case, than those of the charmed and soothed Mozart, to whom we have recently alluded.

Hyde, during his short peregrinations abroad with Burgoyne, had, it is true, heard some very beautiful music, but it was always performed in such a languishing, die-away, affected strain, that although delighting the ear, it offended the taste and mind. " Ah," thought he, as the continental *trajet* passed across his remembrance, " that lovely girl was staying at my

father's while I was making a tour, like an ass! But it is the way with every thing I do; it is sure to be mistimed, or have some unfortunate ending. There is some fatality attending me: always full of the best intentions, yet sure to take a wrong turn in the business, whatever it be; to begin too late, or to end too soon. In future I will allow things to take their course, and without trying to stem the tide, let myself drift with the current of my fortunes."

And he arose, persuading himself that he had made the most sage and moral reflections; forgetting that they had commenced with regrets at not having a few months sooner made the acquaintance of a beautiful young woman. Though we cannot be surprised at his ill humour with himself, as he had strenuously resisted the wishes of his father to be at Nugent Hall while the Malmesbridges were there, that their acquaintance might be the stronger, should chance throw them together in town or elsewhere: and when Louisa had written, after

the departure of the noble visitors, to tell her brother what he had lost, and how very pretty was one of the Ladies Capel, (she might have said both,) he laughed at her letter, and boasted of the sun-bright eyes and raven locks of the *figurantes brunettes!* in whose company he was wiling away the vacant hours at Paris, at Leghorn, at Marseilles; though in fact he was so short a time at any one place, that his acquaintance with any of these was but slight. However, you are soon on intimate terms with a foreigner; there is so little ice to break through. "*Ah ha! Monsieur Jean!*" you will say, reader, "you are forgetting yourself."

The postman's knock was anxiously listened for; and when at last it came, and the letters were handed to Mr. Nugent, one with the Oxford post-mark was passed over to Hyde, with which he walked to the window to conceal his agitation, as with trembling fingers he broke the seal. It was from Green, who gave him to understand that Birstal was rapidly recovering.

The wound was very severe, and its attendant pain great; but the inflammation had subsided, and he trusted that in a fortnight it would be so far healed as to admit of his travelling. Shallowner had taken his departure from Oxford, after writing to Birstal's friends an account of the affair, which procured him so much credit for the way in which he had managed the whole, according to his own narrative, that he received a pressing invitation to spend some time with Mrs. Birstal in Leicestershire, the widowed mother of the wounded. On getting the invitation, Shallowner had ordered champagne into his friend's room, by whom he took good care the damage should be paid, got very drunk, and declared that if he waited for Birstal's recovery he should lose the hunting; so leaving his friend to follow *à son loisir*, he departed the next morning, and the day after was going across the country on one of Birstal's high-breds; for as he said the riddled arm would prevent all riding at Oxford, he would take his

horses down for him, and, without ceremony, had ordered the groom to precede him with the stud. To all this Birstal submitted with stoical philosophy.

Hyde did not gather the above particulars from Mr. Green's letter, which was "full of wise saws;" none of which did he take the trouble to read, after arriving at the true state of his late adversary's wound, the intelligence of which we need scarcely say gave him great satisfaction.

"Well, my dear boy," said Mr. Nugent, after skimming the letter, "I trust your sleep will now be unbroken. This is very comfortable news. Tell me, Hyde," continued his kind father, "have you any debts, or is there any thing upon which your mind is uneasy; for you seemed so disturbed the other night, that I fear something must be harassing you, besides Birstal's affair. If there *is* any thing, tell me freely; for well I know, from being kept too close when a young man, the misery to an honourable mind which a consciousness of debt occasions. You have

certainly not the same excuse for getting into difficulties; but unfortunately we have such terrible examples every day amongst our young nobility and others, that if you have not escaped the contagion, do not be afraid to confess it."

Hyde declared he owed not a single shilling, and that now he trusted his mind would be perfectly easy.

"I hope so, indeed," said Mr. Nugent, putting his hand on his son's shoulder, and sighing deeply; then turning away, he sought the quiet of his own study, to think upon, and to pray for the assistance of Providence to guide and direct that idolized son, now just embarking on a dissolute and heartless world—an awful and anxious era in a parent's life.

After sitting down to write to Burgoyne, about what he could not precisely tell, and wasting some three or four sheets of beautiful wove paper from his mother's writing desk, Hyde gave up the attempt, and went over to the stable to look at his horse, which had the night before

arrived from Oxford. He found him dead lame, cursed the carelessness of his groom, and having ordered one of his father's to be ready by a certain hour, decided that somebody else should be the master of Patroclus. "I'll have that horse to Tattersal's," said he. "*Con*found your stupid head, sir, could you not bring him up quietly?"

"So I did, sir," replied the groom; "but I think he must have got a nail in his foot. He—"

"A nail, sir? it is a pity you have not got one in your own head. I shall make him up, and sell him. D' ye hear? let that leg and foot be well steeped; I think it 's in his shoulder; bring him out here. Why the devil didn't you get him bled at once?"

"He didn't go lame last night, sir; it was only this morning I found him hitch a bit, when I watered him."

"Hitch a bit, confound you! yes; the horse isn't worth a curse. You've been riding him hard along the road, I can see." And if our readers find fault with Hyde for thus lo-

sing his temper, let us beg them to place themselves in a fancied similar situation; master of a fine horse, completely ruined by the misconduct of a groom; for such in fact was the case. The man had stopped at sundry public-houses along the road, and to make up for lost time, he, being rather drunk, had galloped the horse over hard and soft material, and macadamization, without mercy, and the consequences were what we have seen. If the ladies find fault with Hyde's swearing a little, they must recollect that he was in the stable, and that grooms must sometimes have grooms' language, and while they do this they will acquit him of ever having made use of an oath before a lady, which he considered as the most ill-bred thing a gentleman could be guilty of. As to the Tattersal part of the business, he had taken his chance when he bought the horse, and perhaps he eased his conscience by this recollection. Besides, a man can scarcely have been two years as an *un*-student at Oxford, without catching some of the

spirit of the time as to "knowingness." However, nothing is more deceitful than appearance in a horse. We knew a hunter, supposed to be ruined, sold for five pounds, and the seller chuckled at the bargain: six months afterwards an hundred guineas were refused for him. In fact, gentlemen are now such dealers, that a man who can't buy or sell a horse *well*, is pitied; or rather he is looked upon as a fool, especially amongst the Melton men, where the greatest praise which can be bestowed upon "one of us," is, that "he would take his own brother in."

Hyde was so new in town that he was at the place of appointment, where Lord Henry Capel was to meet him, exactly to his time. He therefore had a full hour to ruminate not only on the unpunctuality of that young lord, but upon the beauty and accomplishments of his sister, which had so captivated his own youthful heart.

Finding no Lord Henry make his appearance,

our hero got out of the whirl and dust near Grosvenor-gate, and putting spurs to his horse, only slackened his pace when he arrived between that of Cumberland and the magazine, where having the field more to himself, he gave a loose to his thoughts, which we have already said were inclined towards Georgina Capel.

In short, Hyde was deeply in love: be believed he had discovered the very face which had for years visited his fancy sleeping or waking; and with a fondness not uncommon, though absurd enough to all but the party concerned, he was thoroughly convinced that Lady Georgina and himself were formed but for each other; that fate had, he trusted, willed it so; and before her brother arrived in the Park, he had determined that his she must and should be.

His musings were at length interrupted, as he had slowly rode round to the place of rendezvous, and perceived Lord Henry approaching, to his great grief alone, as he had presumptuously hoped he might be accompanied by his

sisters. However, Hyde was far too wise to let any chagrin appear in his countenance, and the young men shook hands with every sign of pleasure.

"I am very sorry, Mr. Nugent," said Lord Henry, "that I have been so any thing but punctual; indeed, I scarcely know how to offer an apology; but I looked in at the Horse Guards, intending to come through St. James's Park, and H***, of the Blues,—you know him? devilish good fellow! kept me such a d—d long while, that, by gad——"

"Pray don't name it," said Nugent, smiling; "I was endeavouring to console myself for your absence by admiring the different objects the Park presents, and amusing myself with sundry ——"

"Eulogiums," interrupted Lord Henry, "upon the wisdom and good taste of the people, I hope, in coming to this precious scene of wind and dust for the pleasure of an airing."

"We must not be too severe in our criticisms,

however," said Nugent; "for I fear we may ourselves come under some other person's lash for the same thing."

"Comfort yourself on that head," returned the young lord; "for as my friend Rolles, whom I see approaching, says, 'Capel, like the king, can do no wrong.' Cursed bore to be so late, however; for do you know, Mr. Nugent, I am upon a regiment, as Mrs. Ramsbottom would say, and I generally take my ride before the million make their appearance; a sort of constitutional thing. Hate getting jostled and contaminated by these clerks, just hot out of the public offices, where they have been stuck up all day with a quill in their fist, now sporting fixed spurs, by gad, like one of us. Or worse, getting stifled with the smother of some old *ci-devant* grocer or tea-dealer, *taking the hair* in his yellow jarvie with a cypher on it, and a coachman in a pepper and salt coat, and the tops of his boots smeared with Warren's japan—pah!"

"Well, but," observed Hyde, "you have some aristocratic dust, raised by a duchess's carriage, with a fine emblazoned coat of arms, and a coachman whose shoes and buckles——"

"Scarcely make up for the inconvenience sustained," interrupted Lord Henry; "but here comes Rolles: allow me to introduce you,—Mr. Nugent, Col. Rolles.—Oh, this Chifney bit! Well, Rolles, how goes it?—D—n the horse, *be* quiet.—Ah, Bluemantle! how are you? Early for you, is it not? By the way, Rolles, how gets on the opposition Almack's? You patronize it, I hear."

"Won't do," said Rolles: "a few people went there to flatter her ladyship."

"You amongst the number, my Roley?"

"You are by far too sharp, Capel," said Rolles, laughing: "I did not go amongst the flatterers; but the ***s have always been civil to me, and I had no idea of quarrelling with her ladyship."

"But the best of it is," said Bluemantle, "he was at the right Almack's just before."

"There he was right, indeed," said Lord Henry; "for if it was imprudent to slight the marchioness and her opposition, it would scarcely have been less so to cut the concern at the other house, and floor himself with Lady *** and the rest of 'em. I can tell you, you'll get devilish few tickets if they find you out; but it is all right to have two strings to your bow."

"Two! he's got two dozen," said Bluemantle, "and they cannot all fail him."

"Egad I'm afraid you'll have to put up with Almack's in the east if you go on this way; I am seriously afraid for you."

"He's been there already," said Bluemantle: "did you not hear of his being caught dancing a quadrille in Cheapside the other night?"

"Oh, now I give you up, Roley; your character's gone, quite gone; it's all over with you.

I shall tell Lady J*** of you, and we'll see where you'll be next Wednesday."

"You are really too witty for me, gentlemen," said Colonel Rolles, riding off.

"Well, but is that actually the case?" said Hyde to Lord Henry.

"No, but we like to quiz Rolles, for he is eternally boring you with dukes and duchesses by dozens, all his 'most particular friends;' talks to you of what G*** told him, or what D*** didn't tell him, and tells you that Lady Daventry's *soirées* would be nothing if he was not there, the card parties on Sunday evening particularly. He absolutely *must* be there, she tells him, for Lady Luxury says no one can play *écarté* equal to him, and she is a first-rater. I should almost think she had learned it at the Palais Royal."

"Come, come, Capel, you are getting too bad," said Bluemantle.

A carriage, with the strawberry leaves in proud triumph proclaiming the rank of its fair

inmate, now drove slowly past. In a minute, the gallant Colonel Rolles was by its side.

"There he goes! there he goes!" said Lord Henry: "poor Rolles! always peerage hunting. I wonder he hasn't cut me long ago, being only the son of a marquis. I wonder what he has to say to the Duchess of Bamborough."

"I can tell you," said Bluemantle; "he wants a *provoke* to Berwick Castle for the shooting season."

"Well, but the duchess has nothing to do with the shooting department, except as far as the artillery of her *beaux yeux* go; and it is a deuced long way off yet, besides."

"No matter for that. The castle must be regularly besieged this season in town, and the duchess is going to give a grand turn out at Bamborough House, to show off the shield of Achilles, and all the fine things; and the duke is to be got hold of during this, &c. &c. &c."

"Rolles is a good fellow," observed Lord Henry, "with all his oddities; but he hasn't a

shilling: I don't know how he makes it out so well; but I fancy he's looking out for something besides the shooting."

"Looking out for an heiress, I take it," said Nugent.

"What, in that carriage?" said Bluemantle: "gad! you don't find heiresses in dukes' carriages very often, eh, Capel?"

Capel did not seem to enjoy the joke. His uncle was a duke, and a rich one; and though he had no daughters, the thing did not take.

"I rather imagine," said Lord Henry to Hyde, "that Rolles is looking out for a devilish snug thing of some eight or nine hundred a year, which he could keep, without giving up his profession; not but an heiress would be a very desirable thing, I dare say."

Bluemantle here left them, determined not to humour the young lord in his airs; and joining Rolles, with whom he talked over the pre-

sumption of a young man of twenty always taking the lead in conversation.

"His rank," said Rolles, "entitles him to it."

"Phoo! rank! when a man has a company in the guards, he ranks higher than the younger son of a marquis, I should think, who is but a cornet in a dragoon regiment. Depend upon it, Rolles, you do not hold yourself high enough. You'll get into a scrape at the club, if you do not look out."

"That's your opinion, my dear fellow," said Rolles, taking a long and heavy pinch of snuff; "but as it doesn't happen to be mine, or any body else's, you'll be good enough to keep it to yourself in future."

"Oh, certainly. I wish you a good morning!" and Bluemantle rode off, leaving Rolles in a chuckle with himself at having displayed so much *tact*.

Meantime the conversation was not kept up

with any great degree of spirit between our other two horsemen. Lord Henry sported a most austere black stock, over which no shirt-collar was shown, which seemed to threaten the speedy extinction of the vital spark; the only symptoms, in fact, that animation had not ceased, were that he still sat his horse, and still swore at him. They had put their steeds into a sort of hand canter, seeming to do a great deal, while in reality they got over but little ground; while the generous animals, champing the bit, and ill brooking restraint, flecked themselves and their riders with foam.

The gentlemen were both attired in the first style of the mode, with their long trowsers showing no strap, but having that riding convenience nevertheless; their superbly shaped and brilliant boots, and their long fixed spurs, which, as the feet were disengaged, occasionally for ease or show, struck with warlike clang against the stirrup-irons. Nugent patronised the brown, or rather *corbeau* coat built by Stulz, and his

curly locks were surmounted by a hat, which for shape and tastefulness was unrivalled. Lord Henry sported a blue frock *à la militaire:* the wrinkles had all been cut out, and the consequent fit round his lordship's slender waist, we may pronounce *à merveille.* His hat was by Jupp, of a peculiar fashion, we mean peculiarly ugly, by which we do not intend to depreciate Mr. Jupp's hats, but his lordship's taste; the former being remarkably good, and the latter superlatively bad; it was, however, called the Capel hat. Lord Henry showed symptoms of the riding school in his well extended length of limb; while Hyde, whose lessons had been only those learned in following a pack of hounds across the country, (the best, we believe, after all) rode not less gracefully, and perhaps more firmly.

A dashing four-in-hand, with the blinds of the vehicle up, a sort of rum-looking mail, now came banging past them *à grands pas,* the driver of which was a very handsome, very

youthful-looking man, in the complete costume of a mail-coachman, wearing a single breasted snuff-coloured body coat, with a large bunch of early roses stuck in the button-hole, drab breeches, and top-boots, wrinkled, and very low. He sat on three great-coats, one of which was drawn partially round his person, and confined by a single button of mother-of-pearl of monstrous size: a lily shallow hat, and a sprig of myrtle in the mouth, completed the equipment of this genius. People said he had submitted to have a tooth drawn, that he might spit more like a hackney-coachman; but this was not the fact, for it was extracted by the handle of a house-maid's pail, as he reeled home one morning about seven o'clock, after a regular set-to at drinking: the morning had been rather foggy, and it is no marvel that he should have got a fall, all these circumstances considered.

"Do you know that man?" asked Lord

Henry, as the mail drove on, and became eclipsed by its own dust.

"The face is familiar to me," said Hyde; "but I cannot say that I recollect the name."

"Adonis Millefleurs," said Lord Henry.

"*Is* that Adonis? By Jove! what a metamorphosis he has undergone since we were together at Westminster! It cannot be, surely!"

"It is though; but you'll see a little more of him before you are long in town; that is, if you patronize Cannon and Spring, and go to the Fives' Court, or Moulsey Hurst, or to mills in general, and all that sort of thing."

Hyde laughed: he was so very great a novice in town, and had so lately come from the University, that he feared, if he patronized any of these men, things, or places, the people would read Oxonian in his very forehead.

"And what better introduction would you desire?" said Lord Henry: "you'll meet lots

of acquaintances, lots of * * * men there, I'll warrant you. Millefleurs is a strange fellow: where he gets the money to sport away with, I confess puzzles me, for I know Lord Rochdale and he have cut, and they say he's confoundedly dipped."

After a little more conversation of this kind, the two gentlemen separated; Lord Henry to speak to Lady Daventry whose carriage they just met, and our hero to pursue his way to Cavendish-square, in a fit of absence and disappointment at not seeing the Ladies Capel. In emerging from the Park at Cumberland Gate, he was nearly crushed between a stage and a hackney-coach, and was just brought to his senses, as the driver of the latter vehicle passed by, for the former was soon out of hearing on its progress to the Swan with Two Necks in Lad-lane, or some other equally obscure part of the metropolis; and putting the spur to his prancing steed, he soon reached his father's door.

"Who was your friend?" said Lady Daventry to Lord Henry, after his lordship had paid the requisite number of compliments upon the last *conversazione*.

"Mr. Nugent," said the young nobleman.

"Oh! a relation of the Duke of ***'s?"

"I believe not, or at any rate a distant one; but a man of very good family. They are ——shire people."

"He seems a very fine young man. Does he play *écarté*? of course though—but I mean well? Is he a person, in short, one can ask to one's house?"

"I should think so; at least he dined at my father's yesterday."

"Oh, Lord Henry, I declare you are quite incorrigible. Why did you not tell me so sooner? How is Lady Malmesbridge, and your pretty sister? they are both pretty, but I mean my beautiful god-daughter. I have been so excessively unwell,—quite ill, that I have not been

able to see them yet, so I hope Lady Malmesbridge will not think me rude. She has promised to come to me on Sunday, and *you* will of course give me the pleasure of your company?"

Lord Henry bowed, not at all so certain in his own mind.

"The princes this, that, and t'other, are to be with me," continued her ladyship, mentioning their names, "and the dear little Countess * * *, and the Duke of * * *, and several other people, besides all the foreign ministers, ———"

Lord Henry was afraid she would have run them over by the muster-roll, and had bowed at each prince and countess as they were named, hoping to get away; but it was a never ending, still beginning sort of business, and he was obliged to hear it all out; for the dowager was voluble, and would not let him off.

"And, Oh!——" as at last there was a break, and the young lord hoped for a release,—"oh, Lord Henry! Prince Rudolstadt is coming. You know he affects to be exclusive; nobody can have him except a few very select people, some of the *plus distingués*. I shall have great pleasure in bringing you acquainted."

"He has dined with us twice this week," said Lord Henry.

"Provoking creatures you are," said her ladyship, endeavouring to smile; "you get every body!"

"You should be very welcome to the Prince for me," said Lord Henry: "what my mother or the girls might say, I know not; but *I* am tired enough of him. Good morning."

"Oh! Lord Henry!" said Lady Daventry, as he rode off: "Lord Henry, give this card to your friend, when ——"

But Lord Henry would not be called back, once "well away;" and with great kindness

her ladyship sent an invitation for her next Sunday evening's party to our hero, enclosed under a cover to Lord Henry Capel at Malmesbridge House.

CHAP. VIII.

If thou rememberest not the slightest folly
That ever love did make thee run into,
Thou hast not loved:
Or, if thou hast not talk'd as I do now,
Wearying thy hearer with thy mistress' praise,
Thou hast not loved.

SHAKSPEARE.

"A LETTER to Burgoyne must be written," said Hyde to himself, as he took his candle to retire for the night; and this letter must be read; and remember, friends, that if it appear particularly dull, it was composed and penned after dinner, and in sight of a very enticing bed, with chintz and blue-lined curtains, two or three very desirable pillows, and in short, all the

"appliances and means" that modern luxury has invented for courting sleep, though perhaps in fact they destroy it. A good fire, however, and a rose-wood table, on which was our hero's writing portfolio, threw out a lure; and though not especially fond of pen and ink, the young gentleman assumed these implements of war, or love, as the case may be, and ran on carelessly in the following style:—

"My dear Burgoyne,

"Enormously my debtor as you are, and I fear always will be, in the epistolary line, I must take compassion on your present isolated state in the wilds or wolds of Gloucestershire, and give you some idea, you solitary hermit! of what is passing in the mighty Babylon now honoured by being my dwelling-place. But no, come up and be as usual, the 'observed of all observers,' as you were wont. I must flatter you a little, or you will stay vegetating with your uncle and aunt

for a month, and lose all chance of preserving your title of the 'glass of fashion,' which I assure you I have some idea of laying claim to myself.

"A bed, my father desires me to say, is at your service in Cavendish-square as long as you like to stay, or Lord Cirencester continues abroad; therefore come and judge for yourself. I will not give you a word of news or scandal. You are not likely to experience a *very* cold reception in this house; and if you will not come upon this invitation, I cannot help you. By the bye, I have made a most agreeable acquaintance in the Malmesbridge family. I think you must have heard me mention Lord Malmesbridge at Oxford. Oh! my Burgundy, such a woman as one of the Lady Capels is, even *your* fastidious and hardly-to-be-pleased taste would, I think, be obliged to humble itself at her shrine. Not that this is exactly what I wish, for you are too good a looking fellow, a devilish deal—more

flattery you see. No, I would rather sacrifice to the goddess myself, than urge my friend to officiate as high priest."

But as our readers have already gone over the details, some of which Hyde touched upon in his letter to Burgoyne, we shall not tire them with a vain repetition, but merely take up the thread of the epistle, where the person of Lady Georgina became the topic :—therefore, to proceed.

"Burgoyne," continued our hero, "I sat down with the intention of describing to you the lovely woman, in whom I fear I have taken but too deep an interest; but I am unequal to the task, pleasing as it would be, did I think it possible I could do her justice. Ay, you may laugh at me, and call me swain, or what you will, but there is one face in all the world, which sooner or later we must meet with, either for our bane or our happiness; or if we meet it not, it still no less exists. This you will say is

mere raving. It is a theory I have adopted, and with me it has been, I am persuaded, as I state; for that expressive face is one, which, since my childhood, has always been haunting my imagination and my dreams. I have heard that delightful voice, or at least the *vraisemblance* of it, if I may so apply the expression: I have heard it midst the roaring of the winter torrent, in the light breeze of summer, and in the rude equinoctial hurricane of autumn; and ever it has charmed me in idea, though my baffled and disappointed mind has failed to discover and comprehend what and where was the being I sighed for; the something necessary to my happiness, though I knew not what. Now I have found her, so like in voice and person to all that I had pictured to myself, except that she surpasses even my warmest fancy! 'Oh, she is rich in beauty!' Imagine, my dear and indulgent friend, a lovely creature of nearly nineteen, rather tall, and symmetry's self, with intelligent blue eyes, and such eyelashes, my Burgundy, such eyelashes! But her fea-

tures are not regular, and I am conscious that, although I may try to describe her face, I shall certainly fail: her nose is inclining to the Roman, though not Roman: her hair is a light auburn, and revels in pride of place about her fair forehead; but it is the lower part of that perfect oval of a face that has charmed me so much—the *contour* of her *visage;* and the smile that unconsciously plays about her sweet, sweet lips, and beautiful fresh full cheeks, rosy though not over-much, with youth, and health, and gaiety; and the expression, the animation, that gives such harmony and soul to that personification of the *beau ideal,*—that loveliest and most beautiful of countenances.

"But I am aware I grow tedious. With your knowledge of human nature, however, you must be convinced that there is no subject, excepting ourselves, on which the pen is more prolix than that of the person we—love, I had almost said; perhaps if I had not, you would have added it for me. But let that pass.—To you, Burgoyne,

I have long been in the habit of unfolding all my thoughts, and to none but you would I appear so ridiculous, if ridiculous I must be pronounced, as to write in the strain I have done. I will not read over what I have just written. I only beg you to make allowances for the excitement which different causes have lately made me feel in too sensible a degree, and burn my letter when you have perused, and —comprehended it, I was about to add, but that would perhaps be difficult."*

Hyde and Morpheus began to get acquainted as soon as Georgina Capel ceased to be talked of, as perhaps have our readers long before;

* It is unnecessary to state how this letter came into our possession. It was not burnt, as we have made appear by the above transcript, for Burgoyne on its receipt, smiled; and saying, " Poor Hyde, you are very far gone indeed! no, no; this is *too rich*," put it in his desk amongst other papers. What he meant by *too rich* we know not; perhaps, too absurd. *Author.* Very likely, I think. *Reader.*

howbeit, the ending of his letter was abrupt, and we pass on to the next morning, when our hero received a note from Lord Henry Capel, enclosing a card for Lady Daventry's card party on Sunday evening, to which at the appointed time he went. It was the same as usual; and as many of our readers have been there, we shall not describe it. Hyde was introduced to the noble hostess by the youthful lord, and received with her accustomed grace and affability. He played no *écarté* however, being better engaged in talking to Lady Georgina; for the Malmesbridges were there, as well as all the names on the foreign enlistment bill, which her ladyship had laid before the Lord Henry Capel in the Park.

It was here that Hyde received an invitation to Lady Malmesbridge's next party, his name not having been specified on the Nugents' card, owing to his being at Oxford at the time tickets were issued,—a very efficient reason. He was also presented at Lady Daventry's to some

of the lady patronesses of Almacks; and appearing to them "a very proper man,"—and in fact he was so as far as appearance went, "one, whom, take him for all in all, we ne'er," or at least seldom, "shall look upon his like again,"—there was no fear of his being called "a quiz," or "a creature," or "an animal." He was, indeed, by far too distinguished a looking person; one of whom you would say immediately, "There is the perfect model of an English gentleman;" a *rara avis*, now, alas! where there is so much foreign apery and *empressement*, such horrid copying, and eagerness to be thought any thing but what you are, and ought to be proud of; and oh! shall I tell it ye? such vile failures, and such consequent ridicule, amongst the very people ye imitate, fair and gallant English.—But you will not believe me, so I may e'en pursue my story, without stopping to preach by the way.

Mrs. and Miss Nugent having, on Friday night, set out for their parties in Portland-place,

and elsewhere, Hyde also was upon the wing at the usual time, and arrived at Malmesbridge House, amongst a crowd of carriages, which were every moment driving up, cutting in, scratching each other's panels, and causing much alarm to the delicate nerves of the fair and fragile forms they bore; though we have often been astonished at the very great composure and courage which ladies have displayed, when, despairing of being able to get their carriages up for a couple of hours, they have got out perhaps a hundred yards from the door of the house, and threaded their devious and dangerous way amidst carriages and horses; or, highly decorated and richly jewelled as they are, amidst the more dangerous animals—men, of the lowest pocket-picking description; and though they are protected, and sometimes lighted, still it requires nerve and presence of mind to wend their way. But we must recollect the reward, the glittering bait which attracts, in the shape perhaps of a quadrille engaged to be

danced with one, for whom the risk of a diamond necklace or topaz bracelet were but a small sacrifice; the object attained being so much the more highly prized for the perils undergone. A waltz with Count Tourbillon, a flirtation with Prince Scintillanti, a Polonaise with Baron Sarazinsky, or a quadrille, as first named, with the dear, elegant, delightful, Lord Charles Sackville, are each singly more than equivalent.

Hyde was ushered through rows of gorgeously liveried domestics, and less dazzling though equally expensive exotic plants, along the vestibule and hall, and up the grand staircase, having the pleasure as he ascended to hear the various names of Nugent, Newland, and Newgate precede him, bandied from footman to footman, till at last, as he entered the room where stood the marchioness, he heard himself announced as Mr. Nugee.

"Nugee the taylor, by all that's ugly!" exclaimed Lord Frederic Dormer, not intending it to be heard by Lady Malmesbridge, but who

did however hear it, and turn her head to give one look at his youthful lordship. This was rather a mortification to our hero, as was also the laugh which followed the brilliant sally; but Hyde had his revenge, for a voice which he recognised as Bridgewater's immediately took up the speaker.

"No, by gad! Dormer, it's not Nugee; and devilish lucky for you that it is not, for your face would be as long as his bill, and his appearance would 'make each particular hair' of that wig of yours 'to stand on end like quills,' you know, &c. &c."

The laughers, who wished to laugh at something, now turned their risibility on Lord Frederic; and Bridgewater was glad to have parried the ridicule off his friend Nugent, even by a bad joke, in which Lord Frederic seemed, though not very cordially, to participate.

Meanwhile Hyde, nothing daunted, had gone up to the noble hostess, and having paid his respects with well-bred ease and grace, got out of

the line of fire, and, hat in hand, strolled through the wax-lighted and magnificently furnished rooms, not without having first given one look at, and received a corresponding glance from a pair of blue eyes, which were too soon for Hyde cast down and veiled under thin, long, silken fringes, while a slight enhancement of colour gave him assurance that he was any thing but hated. He was soon joined by Bridgewater, and they laughed together at the late incident. This was Hyde's first ball in town; and to an unhackneyed mind we think there are few things more delightful than a well-lighted suite of apartments "thrown open," as the phrase is, in continuous succession; the saloon, the picture-gallery, the four principal drawing-rooms, the India room, the pink room, and in short every coloured room that ever was heard of, although you see in the next Morning's Post, that "on this occasion only eleven rooms were in use." But every thing new is charming to a young mind; how much so then this assemblage

of loveliness, wit, brilliancy, and nobility; such splendour of dress, such enlivening conversation—no, we will not say much about that—but such music, magnificence, and the very essence of *ton* as well as of roses! the drawing-room, "where chalk mimics painting," the carpeted rooms, hung and *meublées* with infinite taste and expense, all combining to glad the young heart. But, when added to this, there is the additional excitement of an incipient passion, the object of which, beautiful and noble, happens to be in the very room with you, who shall describe the bounding sensations, the hopes and fears which move the heart? Hyde felt all this; he was not yet arrived at that listless state of non-enjoyment, the *nil admirari*, into which, sooner or later, a man who leads a dissipated or fashionable life must fall.

Bridgewater and our hero were not long together; each had their object, and each went his way in the brilliant crowd which was now amassing, the one to obtain the hand of Miss

Montague, a young lady of great attractions, and the other to secure that of Lady Georgina Capel for the first quadrille; which done, our hero had some minutes conversation with the marquis, who with habitual kindness gave him several introductions to party-giving peeresses, which were the means of his passing many a pleasant evening, as he generally met with certain friends, whose presence in fact constituted the chief reason for his appearance there. With such an introduction as that of Lord Malmesbridge, to say nothing of his fortune in reversion, not a bad look-out for a younger daughter, our hero found himself *bien recherché*.

A few strains from Colinet's inimitable band now summoned the dancers to be on the alert, and Hyde led Lady Georgina to one of the sets forming. Lord Iford, her cousin, was at the top with Lady Elizabeth. On placing his fair partner, however, young Nugent was not very well pleased by observing one of the Miss Plantagenets opposite, about to dance with a

stupid looking young man, who always kept his mouth open.

"I think we shall be rather crowded in this set, Lady Georgina," said Hyde; "can we not remove to another, where there is more room?"

A slight smile on Lady Georgina's lips announced her perception of the cause of her partner's anxiety to gain another position, when at the moment, up came Lord Henry, who was acting as Lady Malmesbridge's major of brigade.

"Who are you dancing with, Georgy? Oh, Mr. Nugent. How do you do, Nugent? will you be good enough to take my sister into the next set lower down, where there is a couple wanting? I perceive you have scarcely sufficient room here."

Hyde required no second invitation to retire from what promised to be a crush, besides having no particular wish to come into collision with so flinty a lady as Miss Plantagenet.

"I think I can guess the reason, Mr. Nu-

gent," said Lady Georgina, "why you were so anxious to leave our late set."

"What may it be, does your ladyship opine?"

"Why, my ladyship opines that you formed no very great intimacy with your next neighbour at dinner the other day, from what I could observe; and that you have no wish to be longer in her vicinity than can be avoided; am I right?"

"I am afraid I must say yes," replied Nugent.

"I was malicious enough to enjoy the scene excessively the other day," said Lady Georgina, laughing; "I knew what you would get for your pains, and I really was at the same time sorry to hear so much eloquence and wit thrown away."

"You are severe, Lady Georgina!" said Hyde, smiling.

"Severe! No, I am rather kind in giving you the praise which your silent neighbour denied you. Oh! it was so good, so delightful,

to hear you running on about operas, and drawing-rooms, and Dr. ***'s last sermon, which by the bye you must have spoken of upon hearsay, as you were not in town; and then Tremaine; and lastly the chemistry and electricity; oh! it was exquisite. I knew you would not get an answer, for you had never met before, had you?"

Hyde remarked that she must have been placed next a very loquacious personage, who allowed her so much leisure to hear and quiz her *vis-à-vis*.

"Oh, I was next my father you know, and he could not entertain his daughter more richly than you did, I assure you."

Hyde bowed ironically. "Who was on your left?" asked he.

"I forget: but the surprise when you heard her begin to talk with such fluency to my father, and the anger which followed, and your odd mistake with Lord Abberford, and then his detecting you in a fit of distraction,—fallen deeply in love with the sister of your fair enemy."

Hyde was much amused, and not a little flattered by the consciousness that he had been an object of such attention during that dinner, although Lady Georgina now pretended to quiz him.

He was proceeding to defend his conduct, and rectify her ladyship's mistake as to the person he had fallen in love with; but she interrupted him.

"We are to dance, Mr. Nugent, and not to talk, if you please, since we are at last established in this quadrille."

"With your pardon, fair lady, we are to talk and dance both; the former as much, and the latter as little as possible: so say the rules of fashion."

"But I am not ruled by fashion," said Lady Georgina.

"No, fashion is ruled by you."

The quadrille had commenced before this conversation ended; but as nobody thinks of any thing but walking through the first figure, they were not remarked for being thrown out.

The whole set which followed was however danced by Hyde and Lady Georgina with infinite grace and skill, to the great admiration of the non-dancers; for the others were too much occupied with their own performance, or the gentlemen in paying, and the ladies in listening to compliments and flattery, to attend to any thing else.

The music was exquisite; when was a discordant note ever heard at Malmesbridge House? On this occasion, Apollo might have been excused, had he in jealousy dashed his lyre to pieces; for the brilliant tones of the harp, and the melodious strains of the small clarionet and Colinet's pipe, judiciously thrown in here and there, mellowed, and at the same time, as it were, so bound together in one chain of harmony the other instruments, that the least mercurial of the sons of dance must have been moved with saltatory inclinations.

Nugent, the only one we mean to specify, could dance well even to bad music: on the

present occasion, his performance was graceful and gentlemanlike to a high degree; the latter is the chief point in a dancer. Had he acquitted himself with less credit, he had been unworthy to lead out the lovely Lady Georgina, who, devotedly fond of music, with a fine ear, and symmetrically formed, must have charmed every beholder with the ease and beauty of all her movements, even had not the scientific Jenkins guided her early steps. Lady Malmesbridge, who for a moment glanced at the dancers, felt all the pride of a mother in seeing Lady Georgina "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes;" and this satisfaction was not lessened by the conviction, that, although not a nobleman, her partner was about the handsomest man in the room, having that particular appearance, which, though so well known, is difficult to describe, except by the appellation of "distinguished."

Lady Elizabeth, and her partner Lord Iford, the only son of the duke of Bolingbridge, now joined them; but the conversation not being

at this period very interesting, we shall take advantage of the moment to observe that the duchess was sister to Lady Malmesbridge, and that Lord Iford being heir to sixty thousand per annum and a dukedom, was considered not an undesirable match by most of the lady mothers in town.

Lords Henry and William had danced, one with Lady Isabella Fane, and the other with a Miss Plantagenet; they, however, complained, though not to the ladies, that it was "a dreadful bore." The marchioness was in the act of receiving a royal duke, the marquis was in another part of the room talking to Mr. Silkson, and Lady Luxury was kindly condoling with Lady St. James upon the circumstance of her son's having eloped with a married woman, the wife of his friend, when our hero was obliged to surrender up his fair partner to a happier man; and though he felt no great inclination to dance, he was introduced by Lady Elizabeth to the beautiful Miss Montague, with whom he de-

parted for the field of display, *la faire briller dans une quadrille.*

The first-mentioned Miss Plantagenet was now leaning on the arm of her late partner Sir Gilbert Opal, a young, rich, stupid baronet, who, as we before observed, always stood with his mouth open.

"Did you see Mr. Nugent and Lady Georgina Capel in the last quadrille, Miss Plantagenet?" said Captain Bridgewater, coming up to that lady, quite aware of the dinner adventure: "did you see them? I hear it was *à voir.*"

"How should I, Captain Bridgewater, when I was dancing myself? Besides, I do not know who the person is you mean; though I rather believe it is the gentleman who chose to place himself next me at dinner the other day, in this house. If it is, he seems a very forward and a very stupid man, if the two qualities can combine."

"There you must allow me to set you right," said Captain Bridgewater; "for he is neither

the one nor the other, but one of the most gentlemanlike young men I know."

"Nugent! Nugent! I should know the name," spluttered the baronet, whose tongue was rather too large for his mouth.

"And really," continued Bridgewater, not taking the least notice of Sir Gilbert's observation, "and really *for* an Oxford man, has not so very high an opinion of himself."

"Oh, I hate Oxford men," exclaimed the fair Plantagenet; "my own brother is the only exception I ever made in their favour. Were you at Oxford, Captain Bridgewater? I hope not."

"You are quite safe," said the captain: "I was committed to the deep immediately on leaving Eton."

"I was not at Oxford either," said Sir Gilbert, anxiously, by way of easing the sensitive mind of Miss Plantagenet.

This last assurance seemed too much for the risible muscles of a very handsome young man

near the trio, who had with infinite *nonchalance* been staring at them during their conversation, and now burst into a loud laugh.

"Who is that person?" said Miss Plantagenet, though she knew very well that he was Lord Rochdale's son, Adonis Millefleurs, who was justly reckoned the most impudent man in town.

The question went unanswered, for Mr. Millefleurs, having finished his laugh, immediately said, "No, no, Opal; now really were you not at Oxford? Oh, you're joking; now you *are* too severe on us. *By* gad! that's too good."

"Millefleurs all over!" said Opal: "why the deuce do you ever come out of the stable into civilized society, if you do not know how to conduct yourself when you do come?" Another laugh was elicited by this question.

"Devilish good! devilish good!" said the incorrigible Millefleurs: "the longest speech I ever heard you make. Opal, you're not the fool people take you for, are you, Opal?" and

turning on his heel, he sought his friend Wyndham Herbert, who also on that night assisted at Lady Malmesbridge's party.

Miss Plantagenet resumed her conversation with Captain Bridgewater, with whom, as the son of a nobleman, she thought it was not beneath her to hold communion. In the meantime, Sir Gilbert was but too highly honoured in constituting her walking-stick, being only a baronet with twenty thousand a year.

"Captain Bridgewater," said the lady, "I really forgot you were a sailor, you look so much like a gentleman."

The captain put his hand on his heart, and bowed.

"Though," continued she, "now I recollect, Lord Abberford was talking about the Dædalus the whole of dinner time."

"Alas, poor Dædalus! name not the melancholy theme," said the captain; "she is lost to me for ever."

"She!—and lost! I thought Dædalus had been

a gentleman, whose son's wings were melted from flying too near the sun. Have you forgotten your Horace already, Mr. Etonian? Besides, I am sure Lord Abberford mentioned the ship's having arrived at Portsmouth, or something."

"You are infinitely too classical for me, I find, Miss Plantagenet," said the captain, with a smile, "and at nautics would puzzle an admiral: but let us not soar so high; but while talking of the melting mood of Icarus, allow me to present you an ice, although it is but April."

"Who is that great lump of a girl that Opal's picked up there?" said Adonis Millefleurs to Herbert, as they passed by, purposely loud, that it might be heard by the lady in question; knowing her to be Miss Plantagenet, but wishing to revenge the affront of her asking "who was that *person*;" a term most insulting to ears polite, unless, indeed, you say a nice person, or a distinguished person, or, &c. &c.

"Hush!" said Herbert, "it's Miss Planta-

genet; a very fine-looking woman, is she not?"

"Fine? d—n it! there's enough of her, if that's what you mean."

"My dear fellow, *parlez plus bas*," said Herbert.

Millefleurs looked at him in astonishment. The fact was that Herbert was to dine at Lord Plantagenet's the next day, and did not wish to be made a party in affronting his daughter. Reasonable enough, we think; and here it will be as well to observe that the great difference in the dispositions of these two worthies, Herbert and Millefleurs, was, that the one would abuse you behind your back, and the other before your face.

"Oh, by the bye, Opal," said Adonis, returning a step or two, "did I not hear you say something about Nugent?"

"Yes, but I don't know any thing about him," replied Sir Gilbert.

"Well, that's odd, however. Perhaps, sir, *you* can tell me where Mr. Nugent is to be

found," said Millefleurs, addressing himself to Captain Bridgewater, although not in the least acquainted with him.

The captain replied that he was then in the room.

" Hyde Nugent, you mean, sir ?"

" The same," replied Bridgewater, as he walked off to pay his respects to the Duchess of Sutherland, whom he perceived at no great distance.

Captain Herbert now addressed Miss Plantagenet, while on the other side Sir Gilbert and Millefleurs were engaged in an interesting conversation about Nugent, arising from the intimation of the baronet, that he recollected our hero, he believed; for that he was his fag at Westminster, and had encountered many a licking from him (Sir Gilbert), for his obstinacy and laziness.

" A bad return, Opal," said Millefleurs, " for all the exercises, &c. which he did for you. But I can tell you he would be rather a rum

customer now ;—not that he *mills* much, but he *kills* about a man a week. He floored two at Oxford the other day, I hear."

" Pooh!" said the baronet, with a look of contempt and ill-humour: " at any rate it would be ungenerous of you not to take his part, Millefleurs, for I recollect his dragging you out of a ditch in Tothill-fields,—and at that moment your name but ill accorded with your condition."

" Good, very good!" returned Adonis ; " by gad! another long speech! Why you will be getting into parliament by and by, and cut out Canning. I dare say you may get returned for Gotham. Adieu!" and away he went in search of his old school-fellow.

" Polite conversation for a ball-room!" observed Miss Plantagenet, who could not avoid hearing it: " I really must speak to Lady Malmesbridge, to beg she will institute some change. One hears of nothing from your very young men, but Eton and Westminster, or Oxford

and Cambridge; can you not find some more rational or amusing subjects?"

Miss Plantagenet now gave her ears and eyes to Captain Herbert, who entertained her with "a guardsman's dandiest chatter," dealing out scandal by wholesale, and trying, by his very marked attention, to do away with any impression to his disadvantage, that might have arisen in her mind from the outright way in which his friend Millefleurs had spoken.

Against Wyndham Herbert Sir Gilbert stood no chance; he therefore, after vainly endeavouring to *re*-gain Miss Plantagenet's ear with a story of what a pretty *cretur* of a mare he had got from young Cheetham, a bargain which he would not have had but for the circumstance of that youthful dragoon's being "floored and done up,"—relapsed into his former state of stolidity, rendered more so by the wish to get away, which he found, till the lady chose to seek her mamma, was totally out of the question. To his great joy and astonishment, how-

ever, Herbert soon carried her off, and walked through a quadrille as lazily as if he had been about to mount guard at the Tower. Indeed dancing was a most unusual thing for Herbert to be found guilty of; and the knowledge that he had done so, was a means of raising a report next morning at the club, that he was upon the point of being married to Miss Plantagenet; a thing he had about as much idea of as the man in the moon.

If the truth must be made known, Herbert had rather a *penchant* for Lady Georgina Capel, and always paid her the most particular attention. He was, at this time of the evening, a good deal piqued; enough so as even to make him dance with Miss Plantagenet, whom he detested, and always abused to Lady Georgina whenever she was compelled to listen to him. But the reason of this pique? Why, that on first entering the room, and of course not knowing she was engaged to Nugent, he requested her hand for the first quadrille: it was

refused—she was engaged; afterwards he saw our hero advance, and hold some little parley before he led her out, which gave him an idea that then, and not before, Hyde had asked her to dance.

Herbert began to hate Nugent from this night. He inwardly cursed him for being so presumptuous as to pay the slightest attention to Lady Georgina, or dare to secure her for his partner when *he* had unsuccessfully asked her. Little minds are always suspicious, and that of Herbert could not divest itself of the idea that her young ladyship had acted unfairly and dishonourably by him. As for Georgina, she disliked the man, and always discouraged his attentions, which, had he not been blinded by the most lamentable vanity that ever man had, he must have long since perceived; but unfortunately Herbert was one of the many who think it impossible for a woman to resist them when they condescend particularly to notice her, though he was of such a cold, calculating dis-

position, that he proportioned his love to the fortune of its object; he was therefore only half as much in love with Lady Georgina, as he would have been had she possessed her sister's fortune as well as her own; and he consequently, when turning the eligibility of a match with Lady Georgina over in his mind, considered a scarlet fever, a fall from a horse, or a cold caught at the opera by her sister, should any of these prove fatal to that amiable young woman, "a consummation most devoutly to be wished;" for the late marquis had left twenty thousand pounds to each of the girls, with the injunction that, should either die unmarried, the whole was to become the property of the survivor, which in addition to what Lord Malmesbridge would give her, Herbert thought would be no bad *spec.* He never once considered the possibility of a refusal by either the father or the daughter; refuse *him?*—no, no; such a thing never came into his head.

Lady Georgina was leaning on her mother's

arm, not unperceived of Hyde, who had an incipient idea that he might achieve another quadrille with her; but alas! there was a sea between them of plumes and *toques*, sparkling with diamonds, and adorned with pearls: there was a moving, or rather immoveable haberdashery of silks and satins, a host of rouged and pale faces, a regiment of foreign ministers, and native dukes and duchesses, with all the various gradations of nobility; there were Lady Carolines, and Lady Charlottes, and Lady Marys, and Lady Janes, and numbers of Misters and Misses, not forgetting Mistresses, with and without honourable tacked to their names: how was he to make his way through all these? He determined, however, to try; and in pursuance of his resolution he had got half across the room, when he had the mortification to see her ladyship carried off by Prince Rudolstadt into the dancing-room, from whence the strains of Colinet's pipe soon issued, mingled with other sweet sounds; and a glance over the heads of his near conimmove-

ables gave him to see the few plumed, and the many plumeless *coiffures,* bald heads with hooked noses, and wiggy *chevelures* or *véritables perruques,* moving up and down, some in time and more out; but as a tremendous hearselike set of nodding feathers, which every body knew to be Lady Janet Duncan's, completely eclipsed the only head he wished to see, he slowly withdrew from the brilliant squeeze, and while sauntering through a comparatively empty room, he met Adonis Millefleurs, his old school-fellow. A greeting of much cordiality took place between them. Each was struck with the difference of appearance in the other. Adonis, from the delicate and beautiful boy, had shot up into the tall, handsome, and strikingly elegant young man, which not all his groomish affectation and impudence could do away the impression of: there was, however, a dissipated look about him, the hollow eye and sinking cheek, which proclaimed that either deep care, or deep drinking and late hours were doing their work upon

his youthful constitution. The former, people thought, he had little to say to; and we fear it was therefore with justice attributed to the latter cause.

An adjournment to the refreshment-room was proposed, where being joined by two or three other men, the *ponch à la Romaine* and pure champagne were discussed with great *goût*.

At supper, which was a sitting-down one, (a fashion by the bye that is fast going out,) Hyde and Adonis got next each other. A meeting, of an amicable nature, was agreed upon for the next day in the Park, when old times were more fully to be talked over; and as Millefleurs was now beginning to get loud and disagreeable from the quantity of champagne he had drunk, Nugent was not sorry to hear him say he had an engagement which would oblige him to take his leave.

After supper, a select party of waltzers exhibited the various airs and graces incidental to that rotatory species of amusement. Hyde was

rather good at that sort of thing, and entreated the honour of Lady Elizabeth's hand, or waist; which you please, reader.

"I never waltz, Mr. Nugent," said her ladyship.

"Except," said Hyde, smiling, "with my brother, I suppose, or my cousin, or ——"

"Not excepting any one," replied Lady Elizabeth, "in public at least. I think it is too great a display; and I have seen some people look so very ridiculous, and heard them so laughed at, that I have no wish to place myself in a situation where there is a chance of undergoing the same criticism."

"*You* criticised, Lady Elizabeth? What criticism can be but to your own advantage?"

"Thank you for the compliment, Mr. Nugent! but believe me, I do not intend to try the experiment. I know it is very old-fashioned, and perhaps absurd, as I dare say I am pronounced to be by my waltzing friends; but when

once I form an opinion upon a thing, I always persevere in the course I have adopted in consequence."

"And your sister, Lady Georgina; has she the same ideas on the subject?"

"Precisely. But if you wish particularly to waltz, I shall have great pleasure in recommending you to a partner. I see Miss Tetotum is disengaged: oh no! Count Tourbillon is going up to her, *et les voilà*."

"Thank you, thank you very much. I am not at all anxious, as long as you permit me the pleasure of your conversation."

"Really, Mr. Nugent," said Lady Elizabeth laughing, "you are fraught with compliments. Did you bring all these sugar-plums from Oxford? or have you been getting lessons from Mr. Millefleurs? I saw you very deeply engaged in conversation at supper; but I should think he was a bad preceptor," added she, shaking her head. Hyde looked surprised.

" I mean," said her ladyship, " that from a most gentlemanlike, well-bred person, which he was when I first knew him, not a great many years ago, as you may suppose, he is become the prince of grooms and jockeys, the pattern of mail-coachmen, and in short, the essence of vulgarity; all of which good qualities he has aped and put on, copied from great masters, and made his peculiar study with such persevering assiduity, that he is now himself looked up to as the standard of excellence by those who were formerly his instructors."

" A goodly character!" said Hyde.

" And a true one, as you will find," returned her ladyship: " but this might be pardoned, if he would not bring his stable and coach-house conversation into the drawing-room. Really it is too bad. In the days of our great grandmothers, we are taught to believe that there was a little more respect shown to ladies than at the present day; but now it is

bien autre chose. In fact, I do not think that if Mr. Millefleurs were to endeavour, he could say one civil sentence either to or before a lady; and this is the more extraordinary, as I have heard gentlemen say that, amongst themselves, where he wishes to produce an effect, he can conduct himself with the greatest propriety; a thing, however, which seldom happens, I very much fear. My mother asks him to her parties merely in compliment to Lady Rochdale, now abroad, who is a great friend of hers, and she always most cordially wishes he may decline the invitation."

Nugent was sorry to hear of the alteration that had taken place in his friend within a few years when they had been both at Westminster. People were now dropping off fast, and our hero therefore made his exit. Before this time there had been little perceptible change in the number of fashion's votaries, by which the marchioness had been bored to death, though she

was of course obliged to *faire l'agréable*, and look the happiest of the happy. The influx and efflux of company had not, like the flow and ebb of the tide, been visible to the eye; for as one party flew off to another and another scene of gaiety, fresh groups succeeded, coming perhaps from the very house the party they met on the stairs were about to depart for.

A London rout is in fact a "never ending, still beginning" sort of thing, in which no perceptible change takes place, till on looking round, after a five minutes' conversation with some agreeable or disagreeable person, you find the room half empty; and the other half of the company soon hurry off, fearful lest they should be the last in the same degree as they were, before their arrival, apprehensive they might have been the first. And now, gentle and noble hostess, however good your party, your supper, your music, your dress, or yourself, you may make sure of being abused on each

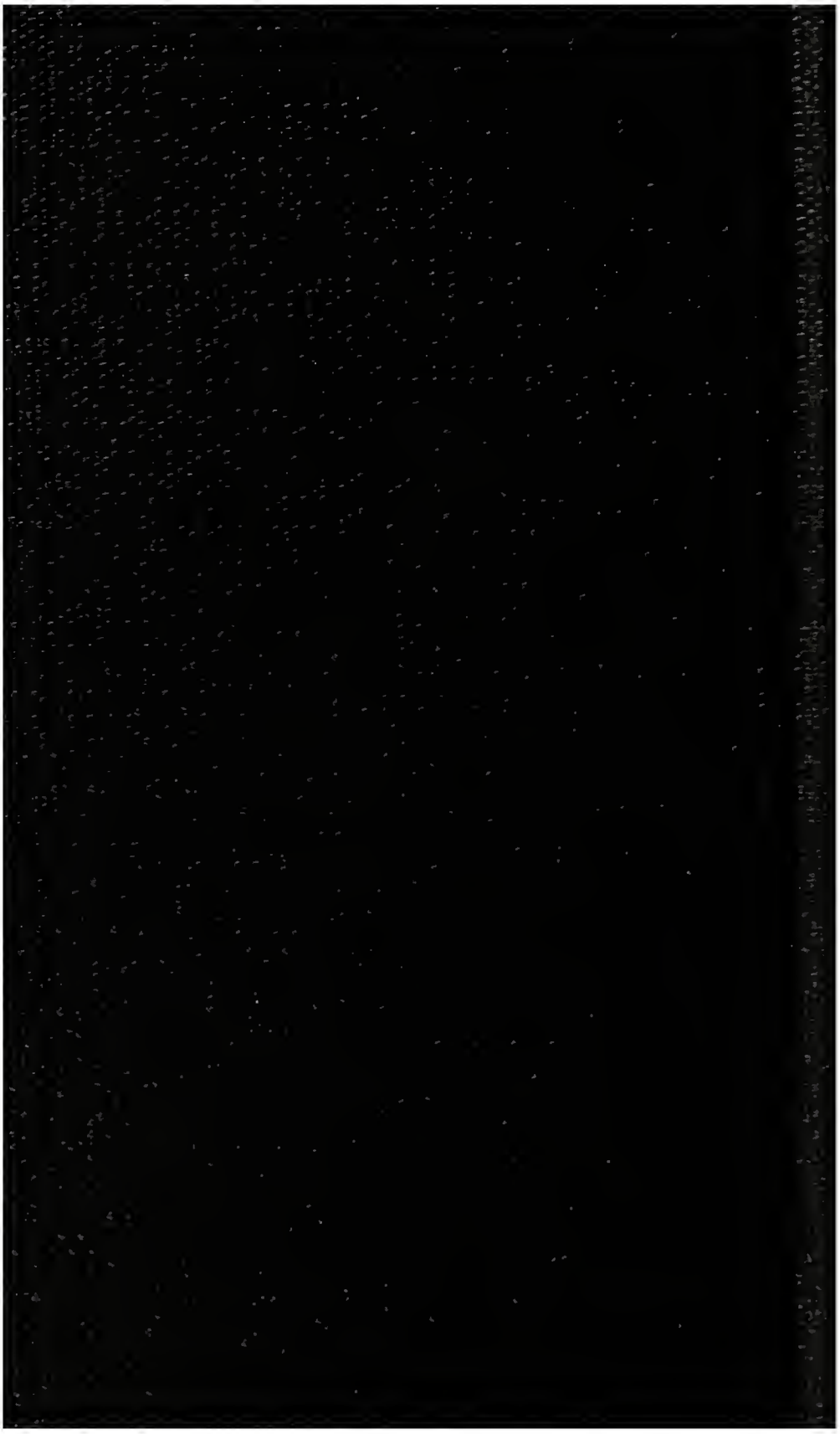
and every one of these points, as soon as your hospitable doors have given egress to your distinguished company. But console yourself; you will the next night perhaps have an opportunity of retaliating; and at any rate, your eyes will be gratified by the account of your rout or quadrille-ball, as, unappetized for grosser food, you sit at your breakfast-table, and devour the "Fashionable World" of the Morning Post, which "shows the age and body of the time its form and pressure." No, no, that is the Age itself; the horrid Age, that ladies never look at, for fear they should see themselves in its dusky mirror. The Post is "the glass of fashion, and the mould of form," except in the summer months, when it certainly grows rather odious, telling you of serenades in the Regent's Park, and admitting into its at-other-times-aristocratical columns, the mawkish letters of Clementina Smith, or the maudlin observations and complaints of Perambulator, X. Y. Z., and a

whole host of atrocities. We wonder at you, Mr. Post!*

But to return to our theme. How few people are there who can converse agreeably, without descending to the hackneyed topic of their friends' or their neighbours' foibles! Some there are, certainly, whose versatility, whose information, wit, lightness of spirit, and elasticity of mind, enable them to "keep up the ball;" or should the discourse be all on one side, to entertain, to delight, to charm irresistibly the pleased listener; but such instances are rare; and it may be regarded as an accepted truth, that when *médi-*

* We beg the Morning Post's pardon. *We quoted without book,* and have confounded it with some other paper; for on examination we find it has no motto whatever. Would it be an adequate *amende* for our strictures on its autumn columns, if we suggest that *in the season* it might adopt the motto of *Sans Tache?* We will not answer, however, for Lord G* * *'s cordial assent to the measure.

sance forms the general character and basis of conversation, it is a criterion, and not a very creditable one, whereby to judge of the *talens de parler* of those who are obliged to make use of such materials in the Babel which they build.

END OF VOLUME I.

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